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John Wesley

THE CENTENARY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM:

A BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE

OF THE

WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

BY THOMAS JACKSON,

PRESIDENT OF THE [BRITISH] CONFERENCE.

'JOSEPH is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." GENESIS xlix, 22-24.

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TO THE

MINISTERS, SOCIETIES, AND CONGREGATIONS,

IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY SETTLEMENTS, AND THE

UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA, WHO, UNDER GOD,

CLAIM A FILIAL AFFINITY WITH

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,

THIS SMALL VOLUME,

compiled with a design to commemorate
that extraordinary revival of primitive faith and piety,
which, arising amidst many discouragements,
and assailed in its progress by every form of opposition,
has, nevertheless, by its direct and indirect agency,
spread "a sweet savour of Christ"
through so large a portion of the globe;
and with a design also, in some humble degree, to promote
among Christians of every name the cultivation of
those divine charities which,
in spite of all the varieties of human circumstances,
and all the fluctuations of human affairs,
shall finally unite the whole fraternity of man in one
happy bond of amity and peace,
is gratefully inscribed.

GLORY TO GOD ALONE.

PREFACE.

THE volume now before the reader has been written in compliance with the request of the late Wesleyan Conference, expressed in the following resolution:—"That our President is requested to prepare and publish, with as little delay as possible, a brief but comprehensive work, on the subject of the Centenary; including, with succinct notices of the origin, progress, and present state of Wesleyan Methodism, and of the leading facts in the life and history of the revered founder of our societies, such remarks as may assist our friends in the devout improvement of the occasion."

It has been the writer's intention to present an honest statement of facts, without any attempt at embellishment. Though he has been compelled to execute his task in a comparatively short period, and in the midst of numerous and urgent engagements, yet he indulges a hope that his work will in some degree meet the views of the venerable body of Ministers who have called

for its publication, and that it will be found not altogether devoid of interest to the general reader. Its leading design is to stir up the pure minds of the Wesleyan societies, wherever situated, by calling their attention to the great things which the Lord has done for them and for their fathers, that under a grateful sense of his goodness they may give unto him the glory which is due unto his name, and may transmit to their children, in unimpaired efficiency, that system of evangelical doctrine and of godly order upon which the divine blessing has so signally rested during the last hundred years

January 1, 1839.

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THE

CENTENARY

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

STATE OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND BEFORE THE RISE OF METHODISM.

Few periods of British history are of deeper interest than the early part of the eighteenth century. The army, under the command of the duke of Marlborough, had gained a series of brilliant victories on the European continent; and, at home, philosophy and polite learning had flourished beyond all former example. The discoveries of Newton filled the civilized world with astonishment; and the compositions of Addison, Steele, Swift, Pope, and others, had secured for that period the name of the Augustan age of English literature. While these eminent men occupied the public attention, other agents were in a course of training, who were destined by Providence to achieve victories greater than Marlborough ever contemplated—victories over sin and brutal ignorance; and to produce changes in the state of society more profound, momentous, and extensive than the most polished writers have ever been able to effect. At the very time when patriots and politicians were fired with the military

success of the great general of the age, and gentler spirits were charmed with the smooth numbers of Pope, and the graceful simplicity of Addison, Mrs. Wesley at Epworth, in obscurity, poverty, and sorrow, by her prayers, example, and assiduous instructions, was forming the character of her sons, two of whom were among the principal instruments of reviving Christianity in its primitive spirituality and power.

The centenary of this great revival of religion, to which the name of Methodism has been given, is intended to be celebrated in the year 1839 by the Wesleyan body, as a subject of grateful acknowledgment to the God of all grace; and the design of the present publication is to trace the leading facts connected with the rise and progress of this work, which is conceived to present striking proofs of divine interference.

That some extraordinary means were then necessary to bring the truths of Christianity more effectually to bear upon the spirit and conduct of the people of England is generally acknowledged. On this subject, indeed, the evidence is fearfully strong and conclusive. It was unquestionably the most unevangelical period that had ever occurred in this country since the Reformation was completed, in the reign of Elizabeth. Infidelity was extensively prevalent, both in the form of downright blasphemy and of philosophical speculation. Of this no doubt can be entertained, when it is remembered that the pernicious and wicked writings of Hobbes, Toland, Blount, Collins, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, Tindal, Morgan, Woolston, and Chubb, were then in full circulation; and that the higher and more influential classes of society were especially corrupted by their poison. The evil was aggravated by the appearance, about the middle of the century, of the infidel speculations of Bolingbroke. By many it was regarded as a settled point that Christianity was a fable, which they

were justified in holding up to public reprobation and scorn, for the manner in which it had restrained the appetites and passions of mankind.

Strenuous efforts were then made by several ecclesiastics to introduce deadly heresy into the Church of God. The learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, occupying the influential post of rector of St. James's, and enjoying the friendship of Sir Isaac Newton and the patronage of the queen, openly appeared as the advocate of Arianism, and was assisted by the erudite and indefatigable Whiston, with other writers of less note. In the west of England, Hallet and Pierce, two able ministers among the dissenters, espoused the same cause, in which they were supported by some of their brethren in London. Waterland came forward as the successful opponent of Clarke; and several dissenting ministers laboured with honourable zeal and talent to preserve their churches in the catholic faith; yet the circumstance that clergymen of superior learning and talent were themselves disputing about the very substance of Christianity, must have had a very injurious influence upon the minds of the common people, and still more upon speculative libertines, in an age of profanity and skepticism. Such men would doubtless be ready to justify their unbelief and indifference by saying, "It will be soon enough for us to listen to the instructions and remonstrances of Christians, when they have agreed among themselves whether the author of their religion was a divine or only a super-angelic being; whether he is to be worshipped as God, or regarded as a mere creature like ourselves." A noisy prelate, Bishop Hoadley, the friend of Clarke, appears to have given up all that is peculiar in Christianity, in compliment to the Deists, who cannot endure mysteries, and to have espoused substantially the Socinian heresy, while, at the same time, he retained his office and preferment in the Established Church. He was

an endless writer of polemical pamphlets and treatises, the spirit and tendency of which are thoroughly secular.

The interests of religion must at all times depend, in a great measure, upon the character and ministrations of the clergy. When these important functionaries live in the spirit of their holy vocation, preach the truth with fidelity and affection, and pay due attention to their pastoral charge, their labours cannot be altogether unsuccessful; for they are sanctioned by the promised blessing of God, which will never be withheld. In the times of which we are speaking, there was, on the part of the great body of the Episcopal clergy, an evident departure from some of the most important theological principles of the Reformation. No man, for instance, can read the works of such writers as Tillotson, Bull, and Waterland, without being struck with the discrepancy between the teaching of these great and learned men, and the doctrine of the homilies which were drawn up by Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and Jewell, especially on the vital question of a sinner's justification before God. Yet Tillotson, Bull, and Waterland are to be classed with the very best of their clerical contemporaries; and the last two, as advocates of the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, have acquired imperishable honours, and will be for ever entitled to the gratitude of mankind. The generality of their brethren fell immensely short of them, not only in natural talents and profound erudition, but in zeal and devotion. Not a few were notoriously ignorant of the science which they were appointed to teach, and therefore utterly incompetent to grapple with the errors and wickedness of the times. They were deficient also in that weight of moral character which is always necessary to ministerial success. Many were despised for their inefficiency, while they were hated for the sake of their office.

The dissenting ministers, in general, professed to hold

the peculiar tenets of Calvinism; but not a few of them, at the period in question, ran into the opposite extreme, and preached a gospel—if gospel it may be called—in which the great truths of the Christian revelation had little or no place. They seem to have thought that Christianity was to be checked and modified by what they, in common with the Deists, called "the light of nature;" and as that "light" discovered to them nothing concerning a trinity of persons in the Godhead, Adam's federal relation to his posterity, original sin, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, and the offices of the Holy Spirit, these teachers maintained a corresponding silence on all subjects of this nature. In many volumes of sermons by dissenting ministers, which were published during this period, however we may admire the learning, ingenuity, and eloquence of the writers, we look in vain for any such answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" as is at all consistent with St. Paul's epistles, or can satisfy the conscience of a man who is convinced of his guilt, and of the sinfulness of his own nature. Among the dissenters there was a great decay of spiritual religion, arising, perhaps, partly from the very high Calvinism which some of them maintained, but chiefly from the unevangelical ministry which had been introduced among them. It is probable that the writings and example of Locke exerted a very injurious influence upon several of their churches. His high intellectual character filled them, as it did many other men, with admiration; his political publications generally accorded with their views: and hence they were prepared to receive his most defective theology. Two of their ministers carried on his very misleading work on the Apostolical Epistles.

These facts are stated, not for any party or sinister purpose, but to show that the nation was on the brink of ruin, both with regard to religion and public morals; and that

unless God in his merciful providence had raised up some extraordinary means of counteracting the evils which were then in full operation, the consequences must have been most disastrous. The age was not so remarkable for any one particular vice or crime, as for a general abandonment to ungodliness, and to profligacy of manners. Persons of rank and fashion laughed at religion, and the common people wallowed in sin. To prove that the statements which have been just given are not only substantially correct, but correct in every part, we adduce the following testimonies. It will be observed that they are not selected from modern writers, but are given by unexceptionable witnesses, who lived in the times which they describe.

BISHOP BURNET, 1713.

"I am now in the seventieth year of my age; and as I cannot speak long in the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this, of speaking with all due freedom, both to the present and to the succeeding ages. Therefore I lay hold on it to give a free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings. I dare appeal to that God to whom the secrets of my heart are known, and to whom I am shortly to give an account of my ministry, that I have the true interests of this Church ever before my eyes, and that I pursue them with a sincere and fervent zeal. If I am mistaken in the methods I follow, God, to whom the integrity of my heart is known, will not lay that to my charge. I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when *I see the imminent ruin hanging over this Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily*

fallen. I will, in examining this, confine myself to . . . the clergy.

"Our Ember-weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers: I mean, the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the universities never mention the reading of to them; so that they can give no account, or at least, a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the gospels. Those who have read some few books yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the catechism itself, how short and plain soever. They cry, and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders; though the ignorance of some is such, that, in a well-regulated state of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy sacrament.

"This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many who, having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures, or any one good book, since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders, not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost: and then they think it a great hardship if they are told they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls. These things pierce one's soul, and make him often cry out, 'O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest.' What are we like to grow to? In what a case are we in to deal with any adversary, atheist, papist, or dissenters; or in any sort to promote the honour of God, and carry on the great concerns of the gospel; when so gross an ignorance

in the fundamentals of religion has spread itself so much among those who ought to teach others, and yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God.

"Politics and party eat out among us, not only study and learning, but that which is the only thing that is more valuable—a true sense of religion, with a sincere zeal in advancing that for which the Son of God both lived and died, and to which those who are received into holy orders have vowed to dedicate their lives and labours. Clamours of scandal in any of the clergy are not frequent, it is true, and God be thanked for it; but a remiss, unthinking course of life, with little or no application to study, and the bare performing of that which, if not done, would draw censures, when complained of, without ever pursuing the pastoral care in any suitable degree, is but too common, as well as too evident."*

BISHOP GIBSON, 1728.

"They who live in these great cities, (London and Westminster,) or have had frequent recourse to them, and have any concern for religion, must have observed, to their great grief, *that profaneness and impiety are grown bold and open;* that a new sort of vice of a very horrible nature, and almost unknown before in these parts of the world, was springing up and gaining ground among us, if it had not been checked by the seasonable care of the civil administration; that, in some late writings, public stews have been openly vindicated, and public vices recommended to the protection of the government, as public benefits; and that great pains have been taken to make men easy in their vices, and deliver them from the restraints of conscience, by undermining all religion, and promoting atheism and infidelity; and, what adds to the danger, by doing it under specious colours and pretences

* Pastoral Care, preface to third edition, 1713.

of several kinds. One, under pretence of opposing the encroachments of popery, thereby to recommend himself to the unwary Protestant reader, has laboured at once to set aside all Christian ordinances, and the very being of a Christian ministry, and a Christian Church. Another, under colour of great zeal for the Jewish dispensation, and the literal meaning of Scripture, has been endeavouring to overthrow the foundations of the Christian religion. A third, pretending to raise the actions and miracles of our Saviour to a more exalted and spiritual meaning, has laboured to take away the reality of them, and by that to destroy one of the principal evidences of Christianity. Others have shown a great zeal for *natural* religion, in opposition to revealed, with no other view, as it seems, than to get rid of the restraints of revealed religion, and to make way for unbounded enjoyment of their corrupt appetites and vicious inclinations, no less contrary, in reality, to the obligations of natural religion than of revealed. And all or most of these writers, under colour of pleading for the liberties of mankind, have run into an unprecedented licentiousness in treating the serious and important concerns of religion in a ludicrous and reproachful manner."*

BISHOP BUTLER, 1736.

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, *that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule*, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."†

* Pastoral Letters, p. 2, second edition.

† Advertisement prefixed to the first edition of the Analogy.

ARCHBISHOP SECKER, 1738.

"Men have always complained of their own times, and always with too much reason. But though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another; yet in this we cannot be mistaken, *that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it;* and, bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in all others after it. Indeed, it hath already brought in *such dissoluteness and contempt of principle, in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes, in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal.* And God knows, *far from stopping*, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, *a continual increase.* Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve; and the teachers of it without any at all. Indeed, with respect to us, (the clergy,) the rule which most of our adversaries appear to have set themselves, is to be, at all adventures, as bitter as they can; and they follow it, not only beyond truth, but beyond probability; asserting the very worst of things of us without foundation, and exaggerating every thing without mercy; imputing the faults (and sometimes imaginary faults) of particular persons to the whole order; and then declaiming against us all promiscuously, with such vehemence as, in any case but ours, they themselves would think in the highest degree unjust and cruel. Or if sometimes a few exceptions are made, they are usually made only to divide us among ourselves; to deceive one part of us, and throw a greater odium upon the other.

Still, were these invectives only to affect us personally, dear as our reputations are and ought to be to us, the mischief would be small in comparison to what it is. But the consequence hath been, as it naturally must, that disregard to us hath greatly increased *the disregard to public worship and instruction;* that *many are grown prejudiced against religion; nay, more, indifferent about it*, and unacquainted with it. And the emissaries of the Romish Church, taking the members of ours at this unhappy disadvantage, have begun to reap great harvests in the field which hath been thus prepared for them by the labours of those who would be thought their most irreconcileable enemies."*

" The necessity of a moral life most men will own in general terms; only what they are pleased to call so is often a very immoral one, both with respect to their fellow-creatures and the government of themselves. But *regard to piety is strangely lost, even among persons that are otherwise tolerably serious. Many have laid aside all appearances of it;* and others, who would seem to keep them up, do it with evident marks of indifference and contempt."†

To the sad testimonies given by these eminent prelates may be added the following, selected from the writings of devout and orthodox dissenters.

DR. JOHN GUYSE, 1729.

" The greatest number of preachers and hearers seem contented to lay him (Christ) aside; and too many there are among us that set themselves against him. His name is seldom heard of in conversation, unless in a way of strife and debate; or, which is infinitely worse, in a way of contempt, reproach and blasphemy; and I am persuaded it never entered less than at this day into our practical

* Eight Charges, p. 4. Edit. 1790. † Ibid. p. 21.

godliness, into our solemn assemblies, into our dealings with God, into our dependances on him, expectations from him, and devotedness to him.

"The present modish turn of religion looks as if we began to think that we have no need of a Mediator; but that all our concerns were managed with God as an absolute God. The religion of nature makes up the darling topics of our age; and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind of light. All that is restrictively Christian, or that is peculiar to Christ—every thing concerning him that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles—is waved, and banished, and despised; and even moral duties themselves, which are essential to the very being of Christianity, are usually harangued upon without any evangelical turn, or reference to Christ, as 'fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him.' They are placed in the room of Christ, are set up independent of him, and are urged upon principles and with views ineffectual to secure their practice, and more suited to the sentiments and temper of a heathen than of those that take the whole of their religion from Christ.

"How many sermons may one hear that leave out Christ, both name and thing, and that pay no more regard to him than if we had nothing to do with him! What a melancholy symptom, what a threatening omen is this! *Do we not already feel its dismal effects in the growth of infidelity, in the rare instances of conversion-work, and in the cold, low, and withering state of religion among the professors of it*, beyond what has been known in some former days? May not these things be chargeable in great measure on a prevailing disuse of preaching Christ? And where will they end if the disuse goes on, and little or nothing concerning him is to be heard among us? How

should all the ministers of Christ, that heartily love him, that are concerned for his honour, and for the honour of his religion, as Christians, be affected at these thoughts!"*

THE REV. JOHN HURRION, 1729.

"The malignant opposition made to him (the Holy Spirit) by some, and the vile contempt cast upon him by others, are things which have quenched and grieved him, and *caused him to depart to that degree as hereby almost all vital religion is lost out of the world.* Hence it is that *the glory of God in Christ, the faith, joy, and zeal of Christians, are under such a cloud at this day.* Is it not, then, high time to speak?"†

DR. ISAAC WATTS, 1731.

"Among the papers published last year there hath been some inquiry made whether there be any decay of the 'dissenting interest;' and what may be supposed to have been the occasion of it. So far as I have searched into that matter, I have been informed that whatsoever decrease may have appeared in some places, there have been sensible advances in others. And without entering into any debate about the particular reasons of its declension in any town whatsoever, I am well satisfied that the great and general reason is *the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men; and the little success which the ministrations of the gospel have had of late for the conversion of sinners to holiness, and the recovery of them from the state of corrupt nature, and the course of this world, to the life of God by Jesus Christ.* . . . . .

"Nor is the complaint of *the declension of virtue and piety* made only by the Protestant dissenters. It is *a ge-*

* Twelve Sermons delivered at Coward's Lecture, p. 261. Edit. 1729.

† Sermons on the Holy Spirit, p. 21. Edit. 1734.

neral matter of mournful observation among all that lay the cause of God to heart; and therefore it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for *the recovery of dying religion in the world.*"*

THE REV. ABRAHAM TAYLOR, 1734.

"When any man of a thoughtful, serious temper considers *the great decay of practical religion in this nation,* and, at the same time, calls to mind the contempt which has been for many years cast on the Holy Spirit and his operations, he must readily conclude that this is *the grand cause of the corruptions and abominations which abound among us.* The Spirit has been grieved and offended, and *he, in a great measure, is withdrawn and gone.* It is, therefore, no wonder that *the religion of the closet and the family is so much neglected, and that public ordinances are of so little benefit to such as, in a formal way, engage in them.*

"There is scarce any method which could be taken to affront the Holy Spirit but has been fallen into by some or other in our present day of darkness. The errors formerly held and propagated by the Arians and Macedonians have been revived, and eager attempts have been made to rob him of his true divinity, and to make him pass for one of the creatures; and some, who would not be reckoned among his enemies, have gone so far as to recommend it to Christians to worship him directly only occasionally, as prudence and expedience may require, and not to bind it on their own consciences, or upon others, as a necessary thing. The detestable heresy of Sabellius has been raked out of the ashes; for some have denied the Spirit's real personality, and have pleaded that he is only a divine power; the active, or the intelligent effective power of

* Preface to An Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion. Edit. 1735.

God, personalized by some idioms of speech. These oppositions made to the Scripture doctrine of the Holy Spirit's supreme deity and real personality, are as outrageous insults as can well be offered him; and the treatment which he meets with, from the before-mentioned enemies of the truth, must be highly provoking to him.

"His motions as a quickener, a convincer, an instructer, and a comforter, are frequently bantered by such as would not be thought to throw off all regard to the Christian institution. His sealing up believers to the day of redemption, or his witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God, is treated with grimace by some who pretend the Bible is their religion. All that profess to depend upon his aid and conduct are ridiculed as enthusiasts by such as do not in words deny the authority of Scripture. It must with sorrow be said—for though it is a sad truth, it is a real fact—that it has been too common for the Holy Spirit to be left out in preaching upon duty; and it has been too general a thing to neglect putting such as are pressed to regard their salvation, on keeping up in their minds a continual sense of their being able to do nothing aright without his aid and assistance."*

Testimonies of a similar kind might be multiplied to an almost unlimited extent; but these may at present suffice. They furnish melancholy proof of the fearful prevalence of infidelity, and of profligacy of manners, among the irreligious part of the community; of the spread and withering influence of antichristian error among professing Christians; while the existing ministry, in the length and breadth of the land, with some honourable exceptions, was comparatively powerless. Churchmen carried on, from year to year, the Boyle Lecture, in opposition to infidelity and skepticism; and the Lady Moyer Lecture, in defence

* Preface to Hurrion's Sermons on the Holy Spirit, p. 5. Edit. 1734.

of Christian orthodoxy. The dissenters also established their Lectures at Salters' Hall, Bury-street, and Lime-street, against popery, and other forms of heterodox opinion which were rapidly gaining ground among them; and many of the lecturers discharged their duty with very superior zeal and ability. Yet amidst all this effort, accompanied by the regrets of good men on account of the declension of spiritual and practical religion, it is undeniable that "iniquity abounded, and the love of many waxed cold." The enemy triumphed, and Israel was faint-hearted. The alleged irregularities of Methodism have often been a subject of loud complaint: so that when Mr. Wesley, accompanied by his fellow-helpers to the truth, appeared in the field of conflict, many an Eliab, both in the ranks of churchmanship and dissent, said to him, in angry tone, "Why camest thou down hither? . . . . I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart." The appeal is now made to those who love Christ and his religion better than the interests of party, whether the answer of the stripling of Bethlehem is not justly applicable in this case: "And David said, What have I now done? *Is there not a cause?*"

Mr. Wesley was not the only man who thought that, at the period in question, the English nation had nearly filled up the measure of its iniquities. The very pious and intelligent Dr. Woodward expressed the same apprehension when preaching at the Boyle Lecture. "Whenever things are come to such extremity," says he, "that the laws of God are trampled on with insolence and boasting, and the mysteries of our holy religion are made the scorn and laughter of profane men:—if blasphemy and obscenity come into credit, and religion and virtue are pointed at as ridiculous;—if it be thought a vain and mean thing to fear God, and to make serious mention of his name;—if it even become unfashionable to praise our infinite Benefactor at our tables, and to appear serious and devout in our

churches ;—if the holy and tremendous name of the great and glorious God be not only vainly used, but vilely treated; his sacred day levelled in common with the rest; and his holy sacraments rejected by some and slighted by others; —if these crying enormities are public and common, and there be no power or authority in church or state put forth to stem or control them ;—such a nation or people will, without a miracle, first become a horrible scene of atheism and impiety, and then of misery and desolation."*

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY LIFE AND THE CONVERSION OF THE TWO WESLEYS.

That form of Christianity to which the name of Wesleyan Methodism has been given arose, without any previous plan, out of the united labours of the brothers, the Rev. John and Charles Wesley. These eminent men were born at Epworth, Lincolnshire, where their father, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, was the rector. He was a man of superior learning and of stern integrity ; and having in early life left the dissenters, and connected himself with the Established Church, his attachment to her interests and order was very strong. Their mother, Mrs. Susanna Wesley, was a woman of extraordinary sense and piety. She was a daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a truly devout nonconformist minister ; and, like her husband, when young she quitted the ranks of dissent, and became a worshipper in the national establishment. In her subsequent life she expressed a decided aversion to what she called "the Presbyterian faith ;" and as the early training of her

* Collection of Sermons preached at the Lecture founded by the Hon Robert Boyle, vol. ii, p. 546, folio edit., 1739.

children devolved chiefly upon herself, she was careful, as might have been expected, to imbue their minds with the same views and feelings. In this work she was successful; and her two sons, when they entered upon their public career, were among the strictest of strict Churchmen, and deemed it scarcely possible that salvation should be attained, at least in this country, in any religious community but their own.

Mr. John Wesley, the elder of the two brothers, was born June 14th, 1703. When about six years and a half old, he had an almost miraculous escape from death. One night it was discovered that the parsonage house was on fire; and when the rest of the family had fled for their lives from the flaming mansion, they were distressed to find that he was missing, being asleep in one of the chambers, to which all access by the stairs was now cut off. In this terrible emergency he awoke and fled to the window, from which he was taken by one of the neighbours, who stood upon the shoulders of another. Just then the roof fell in; so that had his deliverance been delayed only for a few moments, he must have perished in the flames. Thus did a merciful Providence watch over the future heir of salvation, and spare him as the instrument of good to mankind. The grateful father, witnessing this singular interposition of the divine compassion, and finding himself surrounded by his wife and children, called upon all present to kneel down, and unite with him in grateful thanksgiving to God. "Let the house go," said he, "I am rich enough."*

The child thus signally preserved became remarkable, under the training of his excellent mother, for the seriousness of his spirit, and the general propriety of his behaviour; so that at the age of eight years he was admitted

* Arminian Magazine, vol. i, pp. 32, 33.

to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. When he was eleven years old he was sent to the Charter-house School in London, where he was soon distinguished by his diligence and progress in learning. At seventeen he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, where he pursued his studies to great advantage; and at the age of twenty-one it is said that he appeared the very sensible and acute collegian, possessed of a fine classical taste, and the most liberal and manly sentiments. He was afterward elected a Fellow of Lincoln College; and was also appointed Greek lecturer, and moderator of the classes.

At Oxford Mr. Wesley laid the foundation of that sound and various learning in which he was known to excel, and which was of immense advantage to him in future life. When he had taken his degree as master of arts, and his time was at his own disposal, he pursued his studies with undiminished ardour. Monday and Tuesday in each week, he devoted to the Greek and Roman historians and poets; Wednesday, to logic and ethics; Thursday, to Hebrew and Arabic; Friday, to metaphysics and natural philosophy; and Saturday, to oratory and poetry, chiefly composition. In the intermediate hours of close and set study he perfected himself in the French language, paid considerable attention to physic, and read a great variety of modern authors, carefully transcribing such passages as appeared to be particularly important. As the result of this application, he conversed fluently in Latin, and both spoke and wrote it with remarkable purity and correctness. The Greek Testament became as familiar to him as the English; and his skill in logic has been rarely equalled, and perhaps never surpassed.

Mr. Charles Wesley was born December 18th, 1708. Like the rest of the children, he received the first rudiments of learning from his inestimable mother; and in the year 1716, being about eight years of age, he was sent to

Westminster School, and placed under the care of his eldest brother, Samuel, then an usher in that famous establishment. By Samuel he was confirmed in those high-church principles, the impression of which he had doubtless received under the paternal roof. He was sprightly and active; apt to learn; but arch and unlucky, though not ill-natured. From Westminster he removed to Oxford, where he entered at Christ Church, and afterward became a student of that college,—a title which embraces what in other colleges is usually called a fellowship. According to his own account, he wasted the first year of his residence at the university in diversions; but he afterward applied himself diligently to his studies, and graduated in the usual course. He attained to eminence in classical scholarship, his own poetic mind enabling him justly to appreciate the beauties of the great writers of antiquity.

It was during their residence at Oxford that the two Wesleys became deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of religion. They saw it to be the great business of life, to which every other occupation and pursuit should be subordinated; and they perceived, more clearly than ever, that it consists not in the performance of outward duties, but in a right state of the heart. John was the first that received these impressions, which were mainly produced by the reading of three books which successively fell in his way. The first was Bishop Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying;" from which he learned that a simple intention to please God is necessary in every action. The second was Kempis's "Christian's Pattern;" which strengthened his conviction of the spirituality of true religion. The third was Mr. Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life;" in the principles of which he was further confirmed by the same writer's treatise on "Christian Perfection." All these works are well adapted to convince the man of the world that his pleasures are

both vain and sinful; and to make the formalist feel that his empty religion is not Christianity; but while they forcibly inculcate purity of heart as the essence of Christian godliness, not one of them shows the manner in which that blessing is to be obtained. They preserve a complete silence respecting the faith by which the conscience is purged from dead works, and the very thoughts of the heart are made pure; and therefore leave the reader engaged in the hopeless attempt to practise Christian holiness while he is under the power of sin. He is required to love God with all his heart; but he receives no information concerning the manner in which he is to be saved from the condemnation to which he is liable on account of his past transgressions, and from "the carnal mind which is enmity against God." The imperfect instruction which the Wesleys thus received, at this period of their lives, left them unacquainted with the method in which the "ungodly" are justified; and hence they were for many years unsuccessful in their efforts to attain that spirituality of mind which they saw to be both their duty and privilege. They served God from a principle of servile fear, rather than of constraining love. Theirs was not a filial spirit, but a spirit of bondage. They could not "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks:" for they had not as yet "received the atonement;" nor did they see how the sacrificial blood of Christ, and the offices of the Holy Ghost, were to be made available in order to their present salvation from guilt, and from the evils of their fallen nature.

Mr William Law, whose name often occurs in connection with the early religious history of the Wesleys, was a nonjuring clergyman. Being attached to the house of Stuart, and refusing to swear allegiance to George I., he was incapable of holding any benefice, and of publicly performing any of the clerical functions. The English lan-

guage he wrote with uncommon purity, elegance, and strength; and he enforced the duty of entire deadness to the world, and devotedness to God, with almost unexampled earnestness and power; but he appears never to have held correct views of the atonement of Christ, and of its bearing upon the justification of the ungodly. When Mr. John Wesley had obtained the true Scriptural and Protestant view of these subjects, he most faithfully admonished this erring casuist and ascetic, by whom he had been so grievously misled. In the latter part of his life, Mr. Law wandered still further from evangelical truth, and was swallowed up in the quagmire of Jacob Behmen's mystical philosophy. He died in the year 1761, at King's Cliffe, in Northamptonshire. He belonged to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, of which he was for some time a fellow; and after he left the university, lived at Putney, London, Thrapston in Northamptonshire, and King's Cliffe, where he founded an almshouse.

Mr. John Wesley received the deep religious convictions, to which reference has just been made, some years before his brother; concerning whom he says, "He pursued his studies diligently, and led a regular, harmless life; but if I spoke to him about religion, he would warmly answer, 'What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?' and would hear no more." Such was the state of Charles's mind when John, having been ordained deacon by Bishop Potter, September 19th, 1725, and priest the year following, left Oxford in August, 1727, for the purpose of being his father's curate at Epworth and Wroote. John returned to Oxford, intending to take up his permanent residence there as a tutor, in November, 1729; and was rejoiced to find that during his absence, and chiefly by means of his influence, his brother had become deeply serious, having for some months received the Lord's supper weekly, and prevailed upon two or

three young men to do the same. These gentlemen had occasionally met together, to assist and encourage each other in their several duties. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ Church to say, "Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up;" alluding, it is said, to some ancient physicians who were so called. The name was new and quaint; so it took immediately; and the Methodists were known all over the university. On Mr. John Wesley's arrival, he became one of their fraternity; and the direction of their concerns was gladly committed to his superior judgment.

Of this first Methodist society Mr. Wesley gives the following account:—"In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Mr. Charles Wesley, student of Christ Church, Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ Church, and Mr. Kirkman, of Merton College, began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterward one of Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732 that Mr. Ingham of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to their number. To these, in April was joined Mr. Clayton, of Brazennose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them, and afterward Mr. Whitefield."*

This was the first Methodist society. It consisted exclusively of young men, whose theological views were imperfect, and whose experience was limited: yet they had a sincere desire to please God; and in diligence, self-denial, and active benevolence, they far surpassed many who

* Works, vol. v, p. 246, Am. edit.

have boasted of the superiority of their religious knowledge, and have despised these simple-hearted worshippers of God, and inquirers after truth. They instructed the children of the neglected poor; they visited the sick, and the prisoners in the common jail, for whom no other men seemed to care; they attended secret prayer, public worship, and the Lord's table with scrupulous exactness; they observed the regular fasts of the church; they assisted each other in their studies, and watched over each other's spiritual interests with kindness and fidelity; and they conscientiously saved all the money that they could for pious and charitable purposes. Some grave men thought them "righteous overmuch," and attempted to dissuade them from an excess of piety; while profane wits treated them with sarcasm and contempt: but these young disciples of the cross showed the strength and sincerity of their convictions, by patient perseverance in their plans of usefulness and devotion. They consulted the elder Mr. Wesley, at Epworth, who urged them forward in the course upon which they had entered.

An incident which Mr. Wesley has related in one of his sermons will serve to show the tenderness of his conscience, and the serious light in which he viewed his responsibility during this part of his college life. "When I was at Oxford," says he, "in a cold winter's day, a young maid (one of those we kept at school) called upon me. I said 'You seem half starved. Have you nothing to cover you but this thin linen gown?' She said, 'Sir, this is all I have.' I put my hand in my pocket; but found I had scarce any money left, having paid away what I had. It immediately struck me, 'Will thy Master say, *Well done, good and faithful steward?* Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! O justice! O mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid? See thy

expensive apparel in the same light; thy gown, hat, headdress! Every thing about thee which cost more than Christian duty required thee to lay out is the blood of the poor! O be wise for the time to come! Be more merciful! more faithful to God and man! more abundantly adorned with good works!'"*

In another of his sermons, Mr. Wesley has given a very instructive view of the state of his heart at this period of his life, and of his ineffectual attempts to acquire the true Christian faith and love. "After carefully heaping up the strongest arguments I could find," says he, "either in ancient or modern authors, for the very being of a God, and (which is nearly connected with it) the existence of an invisible world, I have wandered up and down musing with myself: What, if all these things which are around me, this earth, and heaven, this universal frame, has existed from eternity? What, if that melancholy supposition of the old poet be the real case,—

Οιη περ φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων?

What, if 'the generations of men be exactly parallel with the generation of leaves;' if the earth drops its successive inhabitants just as the tree drops its leaves? What, if that saying of a great man be really true?—

Post mortem nihil est, ipsaque mors nihil:
'Death is nothing, and nothing is after death.'

How am I sure that this is not the case; that I 'have not followed cunningly devised fables?' And I have pursued the thought till there was no spirit in me, and I was ready to 'choose strangling rather than life.'"†

With respect to the principles of divine love, he also inquires, "What can cold reason do in this matter? It may present us with fair ideas; it can draw a fine picture of love: but this is only a painted fire. And further than

* Works, vol. ii, p. 262, Am. edit. † Ibid. vol. ii, p. 129.

this reason cannot go. I made the trial for many years. I collected the finest hymns, prayers, and meditations, which I could find in any language; and I said, sung, or read them over and over, with all possible seriousness and attention. But still I was like the bones in Ezekiel's vision: 'The skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them.' "*

The society in Oxford had not been long under the guidance of Mr. John Wesley before it was called to mourn the loss of Mr. Morgan, who died at the commencement of his religious course. He was the son of an Irish gentlemen, and evidently a person of fine temper and habits. Mr. Wesley addressed a letter to Mr. Morgan's father, stating several particulars respecting his deceased friend, and expressing the profoundest respect for his memory; and Mr. Samuel Wesley, the younger, wrote a poem on the occasion of his death. Mr. Morgan led his brethren into one department of useful and self-denying labour, by visiting a murderer under sentence of death. The following lines from the poem just mentioned present a beautiful picture of his early piety, and of the spirit of the Oxford Methodists:—

"Wise in his prime, he waited not for noon;
Convinced that mortal never lived too soon.
As if foreboding then his little stay,
He made his morning bear the heat of day.
Fix'd, while unfading glory he pursues,
No ill to hazard, and no good to lose;
No fair occasion glides unheeded by:
Snatching the golden moments as they fly,
He, by few fleeting years, ensures eternity.
Friendship's warm beams his artless breast inspire,
And tenderest reverence for a much-loved sire.
He dared for heaven this flattering world forego,
Ardent to teach, as diligent to know;

* Works, vol. ii, p. 132, Am. edit.

Unwarp'd by sensual views, or vulgar aims,
By idle riches, or by idler names;
Fearful of sin in every close disguise;
Unmoved by threat'ning, or by glozing lies.
Seldom, indeed, the wicked came so far,
Forced by his piety to defensive war;
Whose zeal for other men's salvation shown,
Beyond the reach of hell secured his own.
Gladdening the poor where'er his steps he turn'd;
Where pined the orphan, or the widow mourn'd;
Where prisoners sigh'd beneath guilt's horrid stain,
The worst confinement, and the heaviest chain;
Where death's sad shade the uninstructed sight
Veil'd with thick darkness in the land of light.
Our Saviour thus fulfill'd his great design,
(If human we may liken to divine,)
Heal each disease that bodies frail endure,
And preach'd th' unhoped-for gospel to the poor."

It would appear that the death of this pious youth was answerable to his life. Hence it is added,—

"He knew that works our faith must here employ,
And that 'tis heaven's great business to enjoy.
Fix'd on that heaven, he death's approaches saw,
Nor vainly murmur'd at our nature's law;
Repined not that his youth so soon should go,
Nor grieved for fleeting pleasures here below.
Of sharpest anguish scorning to complain,
He fills with mirth the intervals of pain.
Not only unappall'd, but joyful, sees
The dark, cold passage that must lead to peace;
Strong with immortal bloom, secure to rise,
The tears for ever banish'd from his eyes."

Such was the death of the Methodist that was first called to enter into the world of spirits; and we may well suppose that the peaceful and joyous end of a life so exemplary would afford strong encouragement to his surviving friends, who steadily held on their way, resolved,

if possible, to attain to that standard of holiness which their master, Mr. Law, so forcibly described.

The health of Mr. Wesley, sen., now began rapidly to decline; and he, in common with other members of the family, wished his son John to succeed him in the rectory of Epworth. John, however, was inflexible in his refusal; and neither the solicitations of his parents, nor the remonstrances of his elder brother, at all moved him from his purpose. He summed up his reasonings on this subject under twenty-six heads, which he transmitted in a long letter to his father; but the true reason of his refusal did not then appear to his own mind. "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Had he accepted the parochial charge of Epworth, the probability is, that his influence through life would have been confined within very narrow limits: whereas, he was reserved, in the designs of Providence, for the benefit of the world.

Mr. Wesley's father died in April, 1735, and the living of Epworth was given away in May following; so that he now considered himself to be permanently fixed in the quiet retreat of Oxford, without future molestation; and there he hoped to render important service to the Church by promoting the spirit of piety among the men who were designed for the Christian ministry. Yet his hopes in this respect were overruled. The trustees of the new colony of Georgia were greatly in want of zealous and active clergymen, both to take care of the spiritual concerns of the settlers, and to teach Christianity to the Indian tribes in the neighbourhood. The Methodists of Oxford appeared likely to supply the desired agents; and Mr. John Wesley was requested to accept an appointment to that station. For a considerable time he hesitated; but after consulting his mother, and other friends, he consented; as did also his brother Charles, who received or-

dination with a special reference to this service. They embarked at Gravesend on Tuesday, October 21st, accompanied by Mr. Oglethorpe the governor, Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Queen's College, Oxford, and Mr. Charles Delamotte, son of a merchant in London. "Our end in leaving our native country," says Mr. Wesley, "was not to avoid want, (God having given us a plenty of temporal blessings,) nor to gain the dung or dross of riches or honour; but singly this,—to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God."*

Before Mr. Wesley left England he published a single sermon, which he probably intended as a sort of parting memorial, to be distributed among his friends. It displays very deep seriousness of temper, and a solemn conviction of the necessity of holiness; but, at the same time, it proves that his views of Christian truth were as yet very inadequate. He describes the world as a vast hospital, and the afflictions of life as designed to cure the moral maladies of mankind. Yet he states that, to whatever extent the healing process may be carried in this life, it is only in death that the best of men will be saved from all sin, which is conceived to dwell particularly in the earthly frame. The cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the quickening and purifying energy of the Holy Spirit, upon which the sacred writers lay so much stress, he almost entirely overlooks. With the most upright intentions, but with these imperfect views of their calling, the brothers sailed for Georgia in the character of Christian missionaries. They had more thoroughly digested the powerful and elegant, but unevangelical writings of Mr. Law, than either the epistles of St. Paul, or the homilies of their own Church.

One of the objects contemplated in the formation of the

* Works, vol. iii, p. 45, Am. edit.

new colony was to provide an asylum for Protestants who were persecuted on the European continent; and hence Mr. Wesley and his brethren found in the ship with them several members of the Moravian Church, from Germany, with Mr. Nitschman, one of their bishops. In these strangers the English Methodists beheld Christianity in a light more gentle, attractive, and consoling, than that in which they had ever before seen it. These devout exiles bore every inconvenience, and even insult, with the utmost meekness; they were always ready to render the humblest service to their fellow-voyagers; and in storms and hurricanes, while others were ready to die with fear, they calmly sang the praises of God, expressing a cheerful confidence and resignation in the prospect of being immediately swallowed up in the great deep. With the temper of these people the Wesleys were, at this time, personally unacquainted. Neither of them was delivered from the fear of death, and they had no just conception of the holy cheerfulness which is produced by an application of the blood of Christ to the conscience, and the abiding witness and operation of the heavenly Comforter. Theirs was a religion of fear and mortification, rather than of holy peace and joy.

On their arrival at Georgia, the brothers were separated, John taking up his residence at Savannah, and Charles at Frederica, with the governor, to whom he sustained the office of secretary. They both applied themselves to their clerical duties with a diligence and fidelity of which the world has seen few examples. "As soon as I set foot in Georgia," says John, "I began preaching at five in the morning; and every communicant, that is, every serious person in the town, constantly attended throughout the year: I mean, came every morning, winter and summer, unless in the case of sickness. They did so till I left the province." In addition to this, he visited the

people daily from house to house, and he catechised the children in the school every Saturday afternoon. The following is his own account of his labours on the sabbath in the latter part of his residence at Savannah:—

"The first English prayers lasted from five till half an hour past six. The Italian, which I read to a few Vaudois, began at nine. The second service for the English, including the sermon and the holy communion, continued from half an hour past ten till about half an hour past twelve. The French service began at one. At two I catechised the children. About three I began the English service. After this was ended, I had the happiness of joining with as many as my largest room would hold, in reading, prayer, and singing praise. And about six the service of the Moravians, so called, began, at which I was glad to be present, not as a teacher, but as a learner."*

These extraordinary labours, and the principles from which they proceeded, were ill appreciated by the great body of the colonists, who hated this incessant application to religious duties, and especially the strict ecclesiastical discipline which the brothers endeavoured to establish. Charles, at Frederica, was the innocent victim of a foul conspiracy, by means of which the governor was for a time deceived, and induced to treat his upright clerical secretary with a harshness and severity which had nearly proved fatal to his life. The wicked plot was afterward unravelled, and the governor, with expressions of the deepest regret for the course which he had pursued, gave to this persecuted man a ring, accompanied by the strongest declarations of his confidence and affection, and a request that it might be preserved as a perpetual token of his love. At the beginning of August Charles left Georgia, being intrusted with despatches to the trustees in England, and the governor himself left in November following.

* Works, vol. iii, p. 45, Am. edit.

The situation of John now became increasingly painful. The trustees had appointed him minister of Savannah, but to this appointment he had never consented. He had engaged to go to Georgia only for the purpose of instructing the Indians, and because of the unsettled state of the colony, there appeared no probability that he could fulfil this the only object of his mission. He therefore began to entertain serious thoughts of following his brother to England. In the meanwhile a prosecution against him was commenced, for having repelled a lady from the holy communion, the particulars of which he has given in his printed journal. He attended the court six or seven times, to answer for himself; but finding that his persecutors determined to defer the trial and harass him by delay, he gave public notice of his intended departure, and openly embarked for England in the beginning of December, 1737, having served the colony as a minister one year and nearly nine months.*

Mr. Wesley's mission to Georgia was of the utmost importance to himself, though he failed in the particular object which he had in view. His intercourse with the Moravian brethren served greatly to discover to him the true nature of Christianity. He admired their spirit during his voyage to Georgia, and on his arrival there he was introduced to Mr. Spangenberg, one of their pastors, whose advice he asked relative to his own conduct. The venerable German said, "My brother, I must first ask you one

* The Rev. Robert Philip, in his recent Life of Mr. Whitefield, has broadly insinuated that Mr. Wesley was guilty of some act of immorality in Georgia; though he has not even attempted to give the slightest proof of this most injurious allegation. Having examined various original manuscripts, as well as printed documents, bearing upon this subject, I have no hesitation in declaring Mr. Philip's calumnious insinuation to be utterly unfounded. On this question I will join issue with him whenever he will produce his authority.

or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Mr. Wesley says, "I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'True,' replied he, 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do;' but I fear they were vain words."*

He afterward took up a temporary residence in the house of these devout people; and as they all lived in one room, he was with them from morning to night. He says, "They were always employed, always cheerful themselves, and in good humour with one another. They had put away all anger, and strife, and wrath, and bitterness, and clamour, and evil-speaking. They walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and adorned the gospel of our Lord in all things."

One day while he remained with them, he says, "They met to consult concerning the affairs of their church, Mr. Spangenberg being shortly to go to Pennsylvania, and Bishop Nitschman to return to Germany. After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity, as well as solemnity, of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies where form and state were not, but Paul the tent-maker, or Peter the fisherman presided; yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power,"† It is probable that these were the very first impressions which he received of the existence of Scriptural Christianity beyond the pale of his own church.

* Works, vol. iii, p. 18, Am. edit. † Ibid. p 20

These impressions at length ripened into a truly catholic spirit, of which he lived and died an eminent example.

During the voyage home his attention was especially directed to the state of his own heart; and on Sunday, January 8th, he made the following entry in his Journal: "In the fulness of my heart I wrote the following words: By the most infallible proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,—

"1. Of unbelief; having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled; which it could not be if I believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.

"2. Of pride, throughout my life past; inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I have not.

"3. Of gross irrecollection; inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment; in a calm, not.

"4. Of levity and luxuriancy of spirit, recurring whenever the pressure is taken off, and appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify; but most by my manner of speaking of my enemies.

"Lord, save, or I perish! Save me,

"1. By such a faith as implies peace in life and death.

"2. By such humility as may fill my heart, from this hour for ever, with a piercing uninterrupted sense that I have done nothing hitherto; having evidently built without a foundation.

"3. By such recollection as may cry to thee every moment, especially when all is calm. Give me faith, or I die; give me a lowly spirit; otherwise let life be a burden to me.

"4. By steadiness, seriousness, σεμνοτης, sobriety of spirit, avoiding, as fire, every word that tendeth not to edifying; and never speaking of any who oppose me, or sin against God, without all my sins set in array before my face."*

* Works, vol. iii, p. 53, Am. edit.

About a fortnight afterward he expressed himself in the following manner:—"I went to America to convert the Indians; but O! who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain!'

> 'I have a sin of fear that, when I 've spun
> My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.'

"I think, verily, if the gospel be true, I am safe; for I not only have given, and do give, all my goods to feed the poor; I not only give my body to be burned, drowned, or whatever God shall appoint for me, but I follow after charity, (though not as I ought, yet as I can,) if haply I may attain it. I *now* believe the gospel is true. I show my faith by my works, by staking my all upon it. I would do so again and again a thousand times, if the choice were still to make. Whoever sees me sees I would be a Christian. Therefore are my ways not like other men's ways. Therefore I have been, I am, I am content to be, a by-word, a proverb of reproach. But in a storm I think, 'What if the gospel be not true? Then thou art of all men most foolish. For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life? For what art thou wandering over the face of the earth? —a dream, a "cunningly devised fable?" O who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I fly from it? Should I fight against it by thinking, or by not thinking of it?' "*

Mr. Charles Wesley landed in England December 3d, 1737; and his brother on the first of February, 1738. On again examining the state of his heart, and reviewing his

* Works, vol. iii, p. 55, Am. edit.

past conduct, Mr. John Wesley was deeply convinced that he fell short of the true Christian character. "It is now," said he, "two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, (what I least of all suspected,) that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. 'I am not mad,' though I thus speak; but 'I speak the words of truth and soberness;' if haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see, that as I am, so are they.

"Are they read in philosophy? So was I. In ancient or modern tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I too have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same could I do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I gave all my goods to feed the poor. Do they give of their labour, as well as of their substance? I have laboured more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country; I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed with toil and weariness, or whatsoever God should please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? Yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace? (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty.) Or that I know nothing of myself; that I am, as touching outward moral righteousness, blameless? Or (to come closer yet) the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give me a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God are true, if we are still

to abide by 'the law and the testimony,' all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ they are holy, and just, and good, yet without it are dung and dross, meet only to be purged away by the fire that never shall be quenched.

"This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth,—that I am fallen short of the glory of God: that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; and, consequently, my whole life; (seeing it cannot be that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit;) that alienated, as I am, from the life of God, I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell: that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment; that having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus. I have no hope but that if I seek, I shall find Christ, and be 'found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

"If it be said that I have faith, (for many such things have I heard from many miserable comforters,) I answer, So have the devils a sort of faith; but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the apostles had even at Cana in Galilee, when Jesus first 'manifested forth his glory;' even then they, in a sort, 'believed on him;' but they had not then 'the faith that overcometh the world.' The faith I want is, 'a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God.' I want that faith which St. Paul recommends to all the world, especially

in his epistle to the Romans: that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, 'I live not; but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it; (though many imagine they have it who have it not;) for whosoever hath it is freed from sin, the whole body of sin is destroyed in him. He is freed from fear, having 'peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.' And he is free from doubt, having 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto him;' which 'Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.'"*

These convictions, painful and humiliating as they were to a man who had done and suffered so much in what he conceived to be the cause of true religion, were strengthened and confirmed by his intercourse with Peter Böhler, a learned minister of the Moravian Church, who arrived in England at this time. He was introduced to this distinguished German at the house of a Dutch merchant in London, on the 7th of this month, and omitted no opportunity of conversing with him till the beginning of May, when this pious stranger embarked for Carolina. Mr. Wesley appears to have derived more evangelical light from Peter Böhler than from any other man with whom he had been acquainted up to this period. The following notices in his Journal show the deep impression which Böhler's conversation made upon his mind:—

"Friday, 17th, I set out for Oxford with Peter Böhler. Saturday, 18th, we went to Stanton-Harcourt, to Mr. Gambold. All this time I conversed much with Peter Böhler, but I understood him not; and least of all when he said,

* Works, vol. iii, p. 57, Am. edit.

'My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away!'

"Saturday, March 4th, I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Böhler; by whom (in the hand of the great God) I was, on Sunday the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved. Immediately it struck into my mind, 'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?' I asked Böhler whether he thought I should leave it off or not. He answered, 'By no means.' I asked, 'But what can I preach?' He said, 'Preach faith *till* you have it; and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith.'

"Accordingly, Monday 6th, I began preaching this new doctrine, though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation, by faith alone, was a prisoner under sentence of death. His name was Clifford. Peter Böhler had many times desired me to speak to him before. But I could not prevail on myself to do so; being still (as I had been many years) a zealous asserter of the impossibility of a death-bed repentance.

"Thursday, 23d, I met Peter Böhler again, who now amazed me more and more by the account he gave of the fruits of living faith—the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by 'the law and the testimony;' and being confident that God would hereby show me whether this doctrine was of God.

"Saturday, April 22d, I met Peter Böhler once more. I had now no objection to what he said of the nature of faith; namely, that it is, (to use the words of our church,) 'a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God.' Neither could I deny either the happiness or holiness which he described as

fruits of this living faith. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;' and, 'he that believeth hath the witness in himself;' fully convinced me of the former; as, 'whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin,' and 'whosoever believeth is born of God,' did of the latter. But I could not comprehend what he spoke of an *instantaneous work*. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could at once be thus turned from darkness to light, from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again, touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles; but, to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instances there of other than *instantaneous* conversions; scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul, who was three days in the pangs of the new birth. I had but one retreat left, namely, '*Thus* I grant God wrought in the first ages of Christianity; but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe he works in the same manner now?'

"But on Sunday, 23d, I was beat out of this retreat, too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses, who testified God had thus wrought in themselves; giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!'

"I asked Peter Böhler again, whether I ought not to refrain from teaching others. He said, 'No; do not hide in the earth the talent God hath given you.' Accordingly, on Tuesday, 25th, I spoke clearly and fully at Blendon, to Mr. Delamotte's family, of the nature and fruits of faith. Mr. Broughton and my brother were there. Mr. Broughton's great objection was, he could never think that I had not faith, who had done and suffered such things. My

brother was very angry, and told me I did not know what mischief I had done by talking thus. And indeed it did please God then to kindle a fire, which I trust shall never be extinguished.

"On Wednesday, 26th, Peter Böhler walked with me a few miles, and exhorted me not to stop short of the grace of God.

"Wednesday, May 3d, my brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Böhler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes; so that he also saw clearly what was the nature of that one true living faith whereby alone, through grace, we are saved.

"Thursday, 4th, Peter Böhler left London, in order to embark for Carolina. O what a work hath God begun since his coming into England! such a one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth pass away."

On his arrival at Southampton, Böhler addressed a very affectionate Latin letter to Mr. Wesley, urging him to the immediate exercise of faith in Christ, that he might be saved from the guilt and power of sin, and filled with peace, and joy, and holy love.

When the doctrine of salvation from sin by faith in the Lord Jesus, accompanied by the inward witness of adoption, was first proposed to Mr. Charles Wesley, he opposed it with all his might, and was very angry with his brother for entertaining principles so directly contrary to those which Mr. Law had taught them, and which they had so cordially entertained. About this time he had a severe illness, so that his life was in imminent danger. When his sufferings were excruciating, and it was doubtful whether he could survive many hours. he was visited by Böhler. "I asked him," says Mr. Charles Wesley, "to pray for me." He seemed unwilling at first; but beginning faintly, he raised his voice by degrees, and prayed for my recovery with strange confidence. Then he took

me by the hand, and calmly said, 'You will not die now.' I thought within myself, 'I cannot hold out in this pain till morning.' He said, 'Do you hope to be saved?' I answered, 'Yes.' 'For what reason do you hope to be saved?' 'Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God.' He shook his head, and said no more. I thought him very uncharitable, saying in my heart, 'What, are not my endeavours a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavours? I have nothing else to trust to.'"*

Mr. Charles Wesley, who was thus offended with the doctrine of free and present salvation from sin by faith in Christ, turned his anxious and prayerful attention to the subject, and was soon led to concur in sentiment with his brother and the devout German. Hitherto John had always taken the lead in matters of a religious nature; but this order was now reversed. Charles, who had been the last to receive the doctrine in question, was the first to realize its truth in his own experience. On the morning of Whitsunday, May 21st, having had a second return of his illness, and his brother and some other friends having spent the preceding night in prayer for him, he awoke in the earnest hope of soon attaining the object of his desire —the knowledge of God reconciled in Christ Jesus. About nine o'clock his brother and some friends visited him, and sang a hymn suited to the day. When they had left him he betook himself to prayer. Soon afterward one of his religious acquaintance said to him, in a very impressive manner, "Believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities." The words went to his heart, and animated him with confidence; and in reading various passages of Scripture he was enabled to trust in Christ, as set forth to be a propi-

* Whitehead's Lives of John and Charles Wesley, vol. i, p. 154.

tiation for *his sins*, through faith in his blood, and received that peace and rest in God which he so earnestly sought.

Three days afterward Mr. John Wesley received the same blessing. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, he says, "I had continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart: something of which I described in the broken manner I was able, in the following letter to a friend:—O, why is it that so great, so wise, so holy a God will use such an instrument as me! Lord, 'let the dead bury their dead!' But wilt thou send the dead to raise the dead? Yea, thou sendest whom thou *wilt* send, and showest mercy by whom thou *wilt* show mercy; Amen! Be it then according to thy will! If thou speak the word, Judas shall cast out devils.

"I see that the whole law of God is holy, just, and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that I am sold under sin. I know that I too deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations, and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy. I am unholy. God is a consuming fire. I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

"Yet I hear a voice (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.' 'He that believeth is passed from death unto life.' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"O let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith! By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel 'peace with God,' and 'joy in the

Holy Ghost?' 'Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?' Alas! with mine he does not. Nor, I fear, with yours. O, thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in any thing but thee! Draw us after thee! Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and joy in believing; and let nothing separate us from thy love in time or eternity."

His prayer was heard. "On Wednesday evening," says he, "I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.

"I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."*

From this time the two brothers were new men. A sensible application of the blood of Christ to their consciences rendered them cheerful and happy, and produced in their hearts an intense love to their Saviour. Having obtained by the simple exercise of faith in Christ not only the abiding witness of the pardoning and adopting mercy of God, but also that purity of heart which they had long unsuccessfully endeavoured to obtain by works of righteousness and law, they were astonished at their former errors, and longed to make known the great salvation which is thus attainable by all. Before this period they served God because they feared him; now they loved

* Works, vol. iii, p. 74, Am. edit.

him from a joyous assurance that he had first loved them. They confessed that, up to this period, they had been mere servants of God; now they stood in a filial relation to him; and because they were sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts crying, Abba, Father. They had laboured with all fidelity to benefit mankind, because they felt this to be their duty; but now the love of Christ kindled in their breasts a generous and yearning affection for the whole human race, and a willingness even to lay down their lives, if others might only be converted and saved.

Charles, with his bodily strength impaired by illness, immediately began, in private conversations, wherever he went, to recommend to others the salvation which he had so happily experienced, and with most encouraging success. In one month no less than thirty persons professed to have received the peace and joy of faith in the several private meetings at which he was present. Among these was the Rev. Henry Piers, the vicar of Bexley, with whom he had become acquainted in consequence of his visits to the Delamotte family at Blendon, who regularly attended the Bexley church on the Lord's day. Mr. Piers introduced the Wesleys to the Rev. Vincent Perronet, the pious vicar of Shoreham, who became one of the most valued and faithful of their friends. Mr. Piers was present at the first Methodist Conference which was held in London. He also published a very faithful sermon which he addressed to the clergy at Sevenoaks, about the same period.

Before he left Georgia, Mr. John Wesley resolved, if possible, to visit the Moravian settlement at Hernhuth, in Upper Lusatia; a place which is situated on the borders of Bohemia, and about thirty English miles from Dresden; and he availed himself of this opportunity to fulfil his purpose. On his arrival he was deeply impressed with the order and godly discipline of the church, as there pre-

sented to his view, and still more with the discourses which he heard from the pulpit, and the religious experience of the brethren with whom he conversed. They all declared, as with one voice, that they had been made permanently happy and holy by believing in Christ; so that he was greatly strengthened and confirmed in those views of the truth which he had now received, and which he was unconsciously preparing to preach to others with almost unexampled publicity and effect.

CHAPTER III.

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE WESLEYS FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

FIELD PREACHING.

When Mr. Wesley returned from Germany, he immediately began, with his characteristic diligence to preach justification by faith; with the penitential sorrow by which it is preceded, and the peace and holiness which invariably follow it. He did this in some of the churches of London, but more frequently in what he calls "societies," which then met in various parts of London and its vicinity. They are well described by Dr. Woodward, and had long been very useful in different parts of the land. It was at one of these "societies," in Aldersgate-street, that he had some months before found rest to his soul; and as they consisted almost entirely of professed members of the Established Church, he seemed, as a matter of course, to claim relationship to them. In these small assemblies, which appear to have generally met in private houses, he declared what God had done for his soul, and exhorted the people also to taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

Many believed the report, and were made happy in the God of their salvation.

He was thus employed when he received a letter from his friend, Mr. Whitefield, recently returned from America, and now in Bristol, earnestly pressing him to come to that city without delay. On his arrival, he says, "I could scarce reconcile myself, at first, to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me the example on the Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." On the following day, Mr. Whitefield having left Bristol, Mr. Wesley says, "At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city to about three thousand people."*

This was not the first time that Mr. Wesley had preached in the open air. He did this in Georgia, before Mr. Whitefield was ordained;† but it does not appear that he had any intention of resuming the practice in England, till he was stimulated by the example and urgent advice of his friend. But having once adopted this mode of imparting religious instruction to the neglected classes of the community, he never abandoned it to the end of his life, being deeply convinced of its utility, and strenuously recommending the frequent use of it to all the preachers who laboured in connection with him. He confined not these labours to Bristol, but extended them to Bath, and especially to the colliers at Kingswood, being often surrounded by many thousands of willing and attentive hearers.

On his return to London, in June following, he accompanied Mr. Whitefield to Blackheath, where about twelve

* Works, vol. iii, pp. 126, 127, Am. edit. † Ibid. vol. vi, p. 94.

or fourteen thousand people were assembled to hear the word. At Mr. Whitefield's request, Mr. Wesley preached in his stead; and afterward, for many years, addressed similar, and even larger multitudes in Moorfields, and at Kennington-common, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and other parts of England, Wales, and Ireland.

As Mr. Charles Wesley recovered his strength, he preached in different churches, and frequently to the felons in Newgate, to whom he paid a most anxious and compassionate attention. He often visited them in their cells, composed hymns for their use, explained to them the way of salvation through faith in Christ, and exhorted them to trust in his atonement for pardon and eternal life. Not a few appeared, through his instrumentality, to be brought to repentance, and to a due preparation for the death to which they were appointed. Having recovered his strength, and being strenuously urged by Mr. Whitefield, on the 24th of June, 1739, he says, "I prayed, and went forth in the name of Jesus Christ. I found near a thousand helpless sinners waiting for the word in Moorfields. I invited them in my Master's words, as well as name, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The Lord was with me, even me, the meanest of his messengers, according to his promise. At St. Paul's, the psalms, lessons, &c., for the day, put new life into me; and so did the sacrament. My load was gone, and all my doubts and scruples. God shone on my path, and I knew this was his will concerning me. I walked to Kennington-common, and cried to multitudes upon multitudes, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' The Lord was my strength, and my mouth, and my wisdom. O that all would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness!" A few weeks afterward, he preached to about ten thousand people in Moorfields; and for several years

he followed, with equal steps, both his brother and Mr. Whitefield, in laborious zeal and public usefulness.

The Wesleys were led to adopt this very unusual proceeding through the force of circumstances, and a strong sense of duty; and not in consequence of any plan which they had previously conceived. When Mr. John Wesley returned from Georgia, he says, "I was in haste to retire to Oxford, and bury myself in my beloved obscurity; but I was detained in London, week after week, by the trustees for the colony of Georgia. In the mean time I was continually importuned to preach in one and another church; and that not only morning, afternoon, and night, on Sunday, but on week-days also. As I was lately come from a far country, vast multitudes flocked together; but, in a short time, partly because of those unwieldy crowds, partly because of my unfashionable doctrine, I was excluded from one and another church, and, at length, shut out of all! Not daring to be silent, after a short struggle between honour and conscience, I made a virtue of necessity, and preached in the middle of Moorfields. Here were thousands upon thousands, abundantly more than any church could contain; and numbers among them who never went to any church or place of public worship at all. More and more of them were cut to the heart, and came to me all in tears, inquiring, with the utmost eagerness, what they must do to be saved."*

He speaks more largely on the same subject in another place, where he says, "I believe it may be satisfactory to some readers, if I relate how I began to preach in this manner:—

"I was ordained deacon in 1725, and priest in the year following. But it was many years after this before I was convinced of the great truths above recited. During all that

* Works, vol. i, p. 93, Am. edit.

time I was utterly ignorant of the nature and condition of justification. Sometimes I confounded it with sanctification; (particularly when I was in Georgia;) at other times I had some confused notion about the forgiveness of sin; but then I took it for granted the time of this must be either the hour of death, or the day of judgment.

"I was equally ignorant of the nature of saving faith; apprehending it to mean no more than a 'firm assent to all the propositions contained in the Old and New Testaments.'

"As soon as, by the great blessing of God, I had a clearer view of these things, I began to declare them to others also. 'I believed, and therefore I spake.' Wherever I was now desired to preach, salvation by faith was my only theme. My constant subjects were, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' 'Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.' These I explained and enforced with all my might, both in every church where I was asked to preach, and occasionally in the religious societies of London and Westminster; to some or other of which I was continually pressed to go by the stewards or other members of them.

"Things were in this posture, when I was told I must preach no more in this, and this, and another church; the reason was usually added without reserve, 'Because you preach such doctrines.' So much the more those who could not hear me there flocked together when I was at any of the societies; where I spoke more or less, though with much inconvenience, to as many as the room I was in would contain.

"But after a time, finding these rooms could not contain a tenth part of the people that were earnest to hear, I determined to do the same thing in England, which I had often done in a warmer climate, namely, when the

house would not contain the congregation, to preach in the open air. This I accordingly did, first at Bristol, where the society rooms were exceedingly small, and at Kingswood, where we had no room at all; afterward, in or near London.

"And I cannot say I have ever seen a more awful sight, than when, on Rose-green, or the top of Hannam-mount, some thousands of people were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God, while

> 'They stood, and under open air adored
> The God who made both air, earth, heaven, and sky.'

And whether they were listening to his word with attention still as night, or were lifting up their voice in praise as the sound of many waters, many a time have I been constrained to say in my heart, 'How dreadful is this place! This,' also, 'is no other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!'

"Be pleased to observe: (1.) That I was forbidden, as by a general consent, to preach in any church, (though not by any judicial sentence,) 'for preaching such doctrine.' This was the open, avowed cause; there was at that time no other, either real or pretended, except that the people crowded so. (2.) That I had no desire or design to preach in the open air, till after this prohibition. (3.) That when I did, as it was no matter of choice, so neither of premeditation. There was no scheme at all previously formed, which was to be supported thereby; nor had I any other end in view than this,—to save as many souls as I could. (4.) Field-preaching was therefore a sudden expedient, a thing submitted to, rather than chosen; and therefore submitted to, because I thought preaching even thus better than not preaching at all: First, in regard to my own soul, because 'a dispensation of the gospel being committed to me,' I did not dare 'not to preach the gospel;' secondly, in regard to the souls of

others, whom I everywhere saw 'seeking death in the error of their life.'"*

These extrordinary efforts were severely censured by many persons, as disorderly and irregular: but they were clearly justified by Scripture precedent, our blessed Lord and his apostles frequently preaching in the open air, as well as in the Jewish temple and synagogues. They were also justified by the necessity of the case: for it was only in this manner that the masses of ignorant and wicked people, with which England at that time abounded, could be effectually reached. They never attended any place of worship whatever; so that unless they had been followed to their haunts of ungodliness and dissipation, they must have perished without knowledge and without hope. The spiritual and moral benefit arising from field-preaching was incalculable; so that Mr. Wesley said, "It were better for me to die, than not to preach the gospel; yea, and in the fields, either where I may not preach in the church, or where the church will not contain the congregation."†

When he had been accustomed thus to preach in London for more than twenty years, he says, "A vast majority of the immense congregation in Moorfields were deeply serious. One such hour might convince any impartial man of the expediency of field-preaching. What building, except St. Paul's church, would contain such a congregation? And if it would, what human voice could have reached them there? By repeated observations, I find I can command thrice the number in the open air that I can under a roof. And who can say the time for field-preaching is over, while—1. Greater numbers than ever attend: 2. The converting as well as the convincing power of God is eminently present with them?"‡

* Works, vol. v, pp. 80, 81, Am. edit. † Ibid. vol. vi, p. 638.
‡ Ibid. vol. iv, p. 46.

The self-denial of the men who thus went forth into the highways and hedges, that they might instruct the ignorant and reclaim the lost, is very obvious; especially when it is recollected that their talents and education were of the first order, and such as qualified them to occupy a place in the highest society, as well as to excel in every branch of polite learning. Mr. Wesley thus forcibly expresses himself in his "Earnest Appeal:"—"Suppose field-preaching to be ever so expedient, or even necessary; yet who will contest with us for this province? May we not enjoy this quiet and unmolested? unmolested, I mean, by any competitors. For who is there among you, brethren, that is willing (examine your own hearts) even to save souls from death at this price? Would not you let a thousand souls perish, rather than you would be the instrument of rescuing them thus? I do not speak now with regard to conscience, but to the inconveniences that must accompany it. Can you sustain them if you would? Can you bear the summer sun to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to stand in the open air, without any covering or defence, when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoarfrost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany field-preaching. Far beyond all these are the contradiction of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts; stupid, brutal violence; sometimes to the hazard of health, or limbs, or life. Brethren, do you envy us this honour? What, I pray, would buy you to be a field-preacher? Or what, think you, could induce any man of common sense to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself that it was the will of God concerning him?

"Upon this conviction it is that we now do, for the good

of souls, what you cannot, will not, dare not do. And we desire not that you should; but this one thing we may reasonably desire of you: Do not increase the difficulties which are already so great that, without the mighty power of God, we must sink under them. Do not assist in trampling down a little handful of men who, for the present, stand in the gap between ten thousand poor wretches and destruction, till you find some others to take their place."*

When the Wesleys went forth into the open air, that they might preach the word of life, they in effect declared the depth of their religious convictions. Sometimes they met with a kind reception from the multitudes; but they often experienced the rudest and most determined opposition, especially in the earlier periods of their itinerant ministry. In pursuance of their calling, they exposed themselves to the heat of the summer's sun, and to the winter's cold; the rain, hail, and snow often falling upon their naked heads; while stones, putrid eggs, and every other species of hurtful and filthy missile flew in all directions, and profane men treated them either with contemptuous laughter or bitter scorn. "Howbeit, certain men," enlightened and impressed under their word, in almost every place, "clave unto them," and requested that they might be admitted to the benefit of Christian fellowship, and of pastoral care.

THE FORMATION OF SOCIETIES.

One unavoidable effect of the powerful preaching of the Wesleys was the formation of religious societies. Many of the people, being deeply impressed with the truth which they heard, became alarmed for the consequences of their sin, and desired farther instruction in the way of salvation; and those who had been renewed in the spirit

* Works, vol. v, pp. 163, 164, Am. edit.

of their minds longed for those spiritual helps which Christian fellowship supplies. Hence such as were awakened to a right perception of divine things were, at their own request, united together, for their mutual comfort and edification.

Several distinct Methodist societies were indeed formed, and most of them dissolved, before what are called the United Societies, as now existing, were organized. The first was that at Oxford, which continued from 1729 to the year 1736, when it was perhaps broken up in consequence of the removal of the Wesleys to Georgia. The second was that at Savannah, which met in the house of Mr. Wesley every Sunday afternoon, and was discontinued when he returned to England. The third began in London, on the 1st of May, 1738, under the advice and encouragement of Peter Böhler. It consisted of forty or fifty persons, many of whom appear to have been the personal friends of the two Wesleys, and, like them, piously disposed. The brothers, it will be recollected, had not, at that time, attained the true Christian faith, by which the ungodly are justified, and the heart is freed from the power of sin. The rules of this society were peculiar, and not adapted to general use. Soon after this society was constituted, Peter Böhler left England; Mr. Charles Wesley lost his health; and his brother went to Germany. Yet it continued to meet and to increase, so that in the January following it amounted to sixty people. This society met at Fetter-lane, in connection with the Moravian Church, with whom several of its members were ultimately incorporated. The rest were joined to the United Societies, of which the two Wesleys had the exclusive superintendence.

The fourth Methodist society was in Bristol and some adjacent places. It commenced in the summer of 1739, at which period Mr. Wesley preached in that city and its

neighbourhood with uncommon energy and success, in connection with his friend Mr. Whitefield, who had not as yet separated from him. Speaking of this year, Mr. Wesley says, "In April I went down to Bristol, and soon after a few persons agreed to meet weekly, with the same intention as those in London. These were swiftly increased, by the occasion of several little societies, which were till then accustomed to meet in divers parts of the city, but now agreed to unite together in one. And about the same time several of the colliers of Kingswood, beginning to awake out of sleep, joined together, and resolved to walk by the same rule. And these likewise swiftly increased. A few also at Bath began to help each other in running the race set before them."* The people thus united together were afterward divided, when Mr. Whitefield began to preach the doctrine of absolute predestination. Many of them, however, adhered to Mr. Wesley, and became members of what he called the United Societies, which were formed during the same year, and upon somewhat different principles.

The time at which the first of the United Societies was formed is marked by Mr. Wesley with sufficient exactness. The following is his own account:—"In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did one or two more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every

* Works, vol. vii, p. 149, Am. edit.

week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening.* To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

"This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."†

He speaks still more definitely in his "Earnest Appeal," where he says, "The case in London stands thus:—In November, 1739, two gentlemen, then unknown to me, Mr. Ball and Mr. Watkins, came and desired me once and again to preach in a place called the Foundry, near Moorfields. With much reluctance, I at length complied. The United Society began a little after."‡

Mr. Wesley, therefore, distinguishes what he sometimes calls the United Societies, and at other times the United Society, from all the other religious associations with which he had been previously connected. The first of these United Societies he declares to have begun in the year 1739, after he had taken possession of the Foundry in November. It was therefore formed either in the month of November or December, 1739, and served as a model according to which all subsequent societies were constituted. The societies in question were established "*first in London*, and *then in other places*."

* "Twelve came the first Thursday night; forty the next; soon after, a hundred."

† Works, vol. v, p. 190, Am. edit. ‡ Ibid vol. v, p. 29.

Mr. Wesley did not break off his connection with the society which met in Fetter-lane, and which was principally under the direction of the Moravian Church, till July, 1740;* so that from the latter end of the year 1739, to this period, he was united with two distinct and independent societies in London; one of which was exclusively under his own pastoral care and that of his brother, and the other mainly under the superintendence of the Moravian ministers.

The larger of the United Societies Mr. Wesley divided into classes, each of which was placed under the care of a leader. The work assigned to him in the first instance was, to see all the members of his class once a week, in order to inquire how their souls prospered; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion might require; and to receive what they were willing to give toward the relief of the poor. "At first," says Mr. Wesley, "they visited each person at his own house; but this was found not so expedient, and that on many accounts: 1. It took up more time than most of the leaders had to spare. 2. Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relations, who would not suffer them to be thus visited. 3. At the houses of those who were not so averse, they often had no opportunity of speaking to them but in company. And this did not at all answer the end proposed,—of exhorting, comforting, or reproving. 4. It frequently happened that one affirmed what another denied. And this could not be cleared up without seeing them all together. 5. Little misunderstandings and quarrels of various kinds frequently arose among relations or neighbours, effectually to remove which it was needful to see them all face to face. Upon all these considerations, it was agreed that those of each class should meet all together. And by this means a more

* Works, vol. iii, pp. 190, 191, Am. edit.

full inquiry was made into the behaviour of every person. Those who could not be visited at home, or no otherwise than in company, had the same advantage with others. Advice or reproof was given as need required, quarrels made up, misunderstandings removed. After an hour or two spent in this labour of love, they concluded with praise and thanksgiving.

"It can scarcely be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other. As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And 'speaking the truth in love, they grew up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying of itself in love.'"*

The title given by the Wesleys to the societies which were raised up by their instrumentality, describes their nature in one very important particular. They were not distinct and independent churches, but *United* Societies, being all governed by the same discipline, and placed under the same pastoral care. The adoption of the connectional principle from the very first has led to the most beneficial results. Not only has an identity of character been impressed upon all the societies, but those which have been strong in consequence of their numbers and property, have rendered seasonable help to such as were poor and feeble; and thus the work in many places has been perpetuated where it would otherwise have be-

* Works, vol. v, pp. 179, 180, Am. edit.

come extinct, and extended to neglected districts where the truth could not otherwise have been carried. What one or two societies could not do, has been easily accomplished by the combined exertions of the body. Its strength, under God, consists in its unity; and were this dissolved, the Methodist societies would be comparatively powerless, both at home and in the mission field. All attempts to invade the connectional principle Mr. Wesley strenuously resisted, and his sons in the gospel have hitherto wisely followed in the same course. Without adopting the principle in question, the Wesleys might have been very useful in large and populous towns; but neither they nor their successors could have carried the truth into the scattered villages and hamlets of the agricultural districts, where many hundreds of small chapels now stand, surrounded by the cottages of the poor, and frequented by thousands of devout and happy peasants. It is thus that the system of Methodism adapts itself to the necessities of the humbler classes of society.

"It was by this means," the formation of societies, says Dr. Adam Clarke, "that we have been enabled to establish permanent and holy churches over the world. Mr. Wesley saw the necessity of this from the beginning. Mr. Whitefield, when he separated from Mr. Wesley, did not follow it. What was the consequence? The fruit of Mr. Whitefield's labours died with himself. Mr. Wesley's fruit remains, grows, increases, and multiplies exceedingly. Did Mr. Whitefield see his error? He did; but not till it was too late. His people, long unused to it, would not come under this discipline. Have I authority to say so? I have; and you shall have it. Forty years ago I travelled in the Bradford, Wilts, circuit, with Mr. John Pool. Himself told me the following anecdote:—Mr. Pool was well known to Mr. Whitefield, and having met him one day, he accosted him in the following manner:—White-

field: 'Well, John, art thou still a Wesleyan?' Pool: 'Yes, sir; and I thank God that I have the privilege of being in connection with him, and one of his preachers.' Whitefield: 'John, thou art in thy right place: my brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labour. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.' And what now remains of this great man's labours? Multitudes were converted under his ministry, and are gone to God, but there is no spiritual succession."

This statement of Dr. Clarke, though substantially true, needs some qualification. The labours of Mr. Whitefield, it is presumed, were principally merged in those of Lady Huntingdon's connection, and in the dissenting churches. It is in these communities that the fruit of his most powerful and effective ministry is to be traced.

Some of the earlier societies formed by Mr. Wesley were severely persecuted, not only by riotous men, but in domestic life, and by their employers; being not unfrequently deprived of their only means of subsistence. The following is his own appeal to a persecutor of this class "You employed A. B. for several years. By your own account he was an honest, diligent man. You had no objection to him but his following 'this way.' For this reason you turn him off. In a short time, having spent his little all, and having no supply, he wants bread. So does his family too, as well as himself. Before he can get into other business to procure it, through want of convenient food to eat, and raiment to put on, he sickens and dies This is not an imaginary scene. I have known the case, though too late to remedy it.

"'And what then?' *What then!* you are a murderer! 'O earth! cover not thou his blood!' No; it doth not. 'The cry thereof hath entered into the ears of the Lord

God of Sabaoth.' And God requireth it at your hands; and will require it in an hour when you think not. For you have as effectually murdered that man, as if you had stabbed him to the heart.

"It is not I, then, who ruin and starve that family: it is you; you who call yourself a Protestant! you who cry out against the persecuting spirit of the papists! Ye fools and blind! What are ye better than they? Why, Edmund Bonner would have starved the heretics in prison; whereas you starve them in their own houses!"*

EMPLOYMENT OF PREACHERS WHO HAD NOT RECEIVED EPISCOPAL ORDINATION.

As the Wesleys were led through the force of, what they conceived to be, providential circumstances in adopting the practice of field-preaching, and in the formation of religious societies, so they were induced, in the same manner, to accept the assistance of preachers who had neither been educated with reference to the Christian ministry, nor formally ordained to that holy service. The first that was thus employed was Thomas Maxfield, a young man who had been converted under Mr. John Wesley's preaching at Bristol, in May, 1739. He became deeply pious; and prayed, exhorted, and expounded the Scriptures with uncommon power. Lady Huntingdon, who knew him well at this period of his life, speaks of him in terms of the highest admiration. He was appointed to assist in the society in London, in the absence of the Wesleys, and there he began to preach. Complaint of this was forwarded to Mr. Wesley, who hastened to London with all speed, to stop the alleged irregularity. His mother then lived in his house adjoining the Foundry. On his arrival she perceived that his countenance was

* Works, vol. v, p. 91, Am. edit.

expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. "Thomas Maxfield," said he abruptly, "has turned preacher, I find." She looked attentively at him, and replied, "John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching; and hear him also yourself." He took the advice, and submitted to what he believed to be the order of God.*

Maxfield, however, appears for a time to have been allowed only to officiate in private houses, and other subordinate places of worship; and Mr. Charles Wesley seems to have been less willing to admit of a divine call in this case than either his mother or his brother had been. He was thus addressed by his brother in April, 1741:—"I am not clear that brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound-lane; nor can I as yet do without him. Our clergymen have miscarried full as much as the laymen; and that the Moravians are other than laymen, I know not."†

Mr. Wesley's account of the origin of this kind of preaching, under his sanction, is as follows:—"After a time a young man, named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards; and then a third, Thomas Westell. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct."‡

One of the most distinguished of all Mr. Wesley's early preachers was John Nelson, a stone mason of Birstal, in Yorkshire; a man of deep and fervent piety, of strong and manly sense, of ready and pungent wit, and of admirable

* Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. i, p. 293, Am. edit.

† Works, vol. vi, p. 658, Am. edit. ‡ Ibid. vol. ii, p. 541.

firmness and resolution. His Journal, relating with beautiful simplicity the particulars of his conversion, of his ministry, and of his patient sufferings in the cause of Christ, (for he was unrighteously forced from his family, and sent to be a soldier for the crime of calling sinners to repentance,) is one of the most interesting and instructive publications of the kind in the English language. Of this truly great, though comparatively unlettered man, Mr. Wesley gives the following account, having visited Nelson at Birstal, in the year 1742:—"Hearing he was at home, I sent for him to our inn; whence he immediately carried me to his house, and gave me an account of the strange manner wherein he had been led on since we parted in London.

"He had full business there, and large wages. But from the time of his finding peace with God, it was continually upon his mind that he must return (though he knew not why) to his native place. He did so, about Christmas, in the year 1740. His relations and acquaintance soon began to inquire what he thought of this new faith; and whether he believed there was any such thing as a man knowing that his sins were forgiven. John told them point blank, that this new faith, as they called it, was the old faith of the gospel; and that he himself was as sure his sins were forgiven, as he could be of the shining of the sun. This was soon noised abroad; more and more came to inquire concerning these strange things. Some put him upon the proof of the great truths which such inquiries naturally led him to mention; and thus he was brought unawares to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of Scripture. This he did at first, sitting in his house, till the company increased so that the house could not contain them. Then he stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do, in the evening as soon as he came from work. God immediately set his

seal to what was spoken; and several believed, and therefore declared that God was merciful also to their unrighteousness, and had forgiven all their sins."*

In this manner John Nelson was employed as a teacher of Christianity at this early period. He afterward extended his labours by preaching during his dinner hour, and in the week-day evenings, as well as on the sabbath, in the surrounding towns and villages, till the magistrates interfered and sent him into the army, where he maintained his integrity, and nobly confessed his Lord. Subsequently to his liberation he was entirely devoted to the work of preaching the gospel; and died, as he had lived, a good soldier of Jesus Christ, in the year 1774. His answers to cavillers, and the reproofs which he suddenly administered, were often most effective. Two instances may be given in illustration. When he had been pressed for a soldier, and was standing under a guard in the street at Leeds, a jolly well-dressed woman came to him, and putting her face close to his, said, "Now, Nelson, where is thy God? Thou saidst at Shent's door, as thou wast preaching, thou wast no more afraid of his promise failing, than thou wast of dropping through the heart of the earth." He answered, "Look into the seventh chapter of Micah, and read the eighth and tenth verses." The words of those verses are, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God?"

When brought before one of the aldermen of Nottingham, that guardian of the public peace said, "I wonder you can't stay in your own places. You might be convinced by this time, that the mob of Nottingham will never

* Works, vol. iii, p. 252, Am. edit.

let you preach quietly in this town." John promptly responded, "I beg pardon, sir; I did not know before now that this town was governed by a mob; for most such towns are governed by magistrates." The alderman scolded; but his blushes betrayed the emotion which John's gentle and well-timed sarcasm had created.

From the time at which the preaching of Messrs. Maxfield, Westell, Richards, and Nelson received the sanction of the two Wesleys, other men, of similar piety and gifts, offered their services, and were accepted; so that besides a large number of local preachers who laboured only in their own respective neighbourhoods, in the year 1765 the number of those who were wholly devoted to the work of preaching the gospel, and were not episcopally ordained, amounted to ninety-four; and at the time of Mr. Wesley's death they amounted to three hundred, including thirteen in the West Indies, and six in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. To these must be added the ministers belonging to the powerful and rapidly increasing connection in the United States of America.

Many of the preachers, in common with the two Wesleys, by whom they were sanctioned and employed, endured severe and cruel persecutions, especially in the earlier periods of their ministry. Of this several instances are upon record. Two only will we mention in this place. Under the date of June 11th, 1744, Mr. Wesley says in his Journal, "I left Newcastle, and in the afternoon met John Nelson, at Durham, with Thomas Beard, another quiet and peaceable man, who had lately been torn from his trade, and wife, and children, and sent away as a soldier, that is, banished from all that was near and dear to him, and constrained to dwell among lions, for no other crime, either committed or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance. But his soul was in nothing terrified by his adversaries. Yet the body, after a while, sunk

under its burden. He was then lodged in the hospital, at Newcastle, where he still praised God continually. His fever increasing, he was let blood. His arm festered, mortified, and was cut off: two or three days after which God signed his discharge, and called him up to his eternal home.

> "'Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
> The better fight; who single hast maintain'd,
> Against revolted multitudes, the cause
> Of God; in word mightier than they in arms.'"

Mr. Thomas Mitchell gives the following account:—"In the year 1751 I was stationed in Lincolnshire. I found a serious people, and an open door; but there were many adversaries. This was far the most trying year which I had ever known. But in every temptation God made a way to escape, that I might be able to bear it.

"On Sunday, August 7th, I came to Wrangle, very early in the morning. I preached, as usual, at five. About six, two constables came at the head of a large mob. They violently broke in upon the people, seized upon me, pulled me down, and took me to a public house, where they kept me till four in the afternoon. Then one of the constables seemed to relent, and said, 'I will go to the minister, and inquire of him whether we may not now let the poor man go.' When he came back he said they were not to let him go yet. So he took me out to the mob, who presently hurried me away, and threw me into a pool of standing water. It took me up to the neck. Several times I strove to get out, but they pitched me in again. They told me I must go through it seven times. I did so; and then they let me come out. When I had got upon dry ground, a man stood ready with a pot full of white paint. He painted me all over from head to foot, and then they carried me into a public house again. Here I was kept till they had put five more of our friends into the water. Then they

came and took me out again, and carried me to a great pond, which was railed in on every side, being ten or twelve feet deep. Here four men took me by my legs and arms, and swung me backward and forward. For a moment I felt the flesh shrink; but it was quickly gone. I gave myself up to the Lord, and was content his will should be done. They swung me two or three times, and then threw me as far as they could into the water. The fall and the water soon took away my senses, so that I felt nothing more. But some of them were not willing to have me drowned. So they watched till I came above water, and then catching hold of my clothes with a long pole, made shift to drag me out.

"I lay senseless for some time. When I came to myself, I saw only two men standing by me. One of them helped me up, and desired me to go with him. He brought me to a little house, where they quickly put me to bed. But I had not lain long before the mob came again, pulled me out of bed carried me into the street, and swore they would take away one of my limbs, if I would not promise to come there no more. I told them, 'I can promise no such thing.' But the man that had hold of me promised for me, and took me back into the house, and put me to bed again.

"Some of the mob then went to the minister again, to know what they must do with me. He told them, 'You must take him out of the parish.' So they came, and took me out of bed a second time. But I had no clothes to put on; my own being wet, and also covered with paint. But they put an old coat about me, took me about a mile, and set me upon a little hill. They then shouted three times, 'God save the king, and the devil take the preacher!'

"Here they left me pennyless and friendless: for no one durst come near me. And my strength was nearly gone; so that I had much ado to walk, or even to stand.

But from the beginning to the end my mind was in perfect peace. I found no anger or resentment, but could heartily pray for my persecutors. But I knew not what to do, or where to go. Indeed, one of our friends lived three or four miles off. But I was so weak and ill, that it did not seem possible for me to get so far. However, I trusted in God, and set out; and at length I got to the house. The family did every thing for me that was in their power: they got me clothes, and whatever else was needful. I rested four days with them, in which time my strength was tolerably restored. Then I went into the circuit, where I met with more persecution. As I was preaching in a certain village in the Fen, the mob came into the house, and broke through the congregation, in order to pull me down; but the good woman of the house took me into the parlour, and stood in the door with a great kitchen poker in her hand, and told the mob the first man that came near the door she would knock him down. As she was very big with child, and near the time of her travail, this, with the sight of the great poker, kept them off, so that they could not get at me. However, they stayed for some time, and then left the house without doing much harm. After they were gone, I gave an exhortation, went to prayer, and then went to bed in peace. In the midst of this persecution, many were brought to the saving knowledge of God: and as the sufferings of Christ abounded, so our consolations by Christ abounded also. As to the lions at Wrangle, an appeal to the Court of King's Bench made both them and the minister quiet as lambs."*

Some of Mr. Wesley's early preachers were men of strong intellect, and attained to considerable eminence in sacred scholarship. Thomas Olivers, originally a shoe-

* Experience of Early Methodist Preachers, pp. 231–33.

maker, and a young man of profligate habits, became not only an excellent Christian, but an able and powerful preacher. He wrote several polemical tracts, which reflect great credit upon his theological attainments, and his ability as a reasoner. The fine hymns beginning,

"Lo, He comes, with clouds descending,"

and,

"The God of Abraham praise,"

were both his composition; and also the beautiful and appropriate tune which is set to the first of them in Mr. Wesley's "Sacred Harmony." Thomas Walsh Mr. Wesley declares to have been the best biblical scholar with whom he was ever acquainted. Though he died at the early age of twenty-eight, yet, says Mr. Wesley, "if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell, after a little pause, not only how often the one or the other occurred in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place. Such a master of biblic knowledge I never saw before, and never expect to see again."* Others of them were well acquainted with the English Scriptures, with Christian theology, and especially with the nature of personal religion; and that they were able and effective preachers is attested by the fruit of their labours in every part of the land. "In one thing which they profess to know," says Mr. Wesley, "they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University, (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do. But O, what manner of examination do most of those candidates go through! and

* Works, vol. ii, p. 285, Am. edit.

what proof are the testimonials commonly brought, (as solemn as the form is wherein they run,) either of their piety or knowledge, to whom are intrusted those sheep which God hath purchased with his own blood!"

INSTITUTION OF AN ITINERANT MINISTRY.

When the Wesleys began to preach the doctrine of salvation by faith, they did not confine their ministrations to any particular town, much less to any one congregation. From London, Mr. John Wesley, as we have already seen, extended his labours to Bristol, Kingswood, and Bath; and in the course of a very few years, he visited the most populous towns and districts in England; especially Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, and the most thickly-peopled parts of Yorkshire, Staffordshire, and Cornwall. His brother Charles breathed the same spirit of holy zeal and enterprise, and followed in the same path of shame and glory with equal boldness and fidelity. Personal ease and honour they appear never to have thought of. Life itself was with them of no account, except as it was employed in bringing souls to Christ. The want of what others would have deemed suitable places to preach in was to them no difficulty. When the churches were closed against them, they were ready to deliver their evangelical message in a private house, in a barn, in a public road, in the market-place, in a field; as our blessed Lord preached on a mountain, upon a plain, and in the fishing-boat of Simon Peter. Preaching two or three times a day, and travelling with great rapidity, their voices were soon heard in the length and breadth of the land. The neglected populace of London, the papists of Ireland, the miners of Cornwall, the colliers of Kingswood, of Staffordshire, and of the north, with the keelmen of the Tyne, engaged the especial sympathy, and shared the labours of these apostolic men. After a few years Charles became a family-

man, and confined his ministry chiefly to London and Bristol. John's itinerancy continued, without abatement, to the end of his protracted life.

The ministry which was assigned to their fellow-labourers was of a somewhat similar kind. Every one of them was required to be a "travelling preacher." The country was divided into circuits, to each of which two or three regular fellow-labourers were generally appointed. Some of the circuits were at first very extensive, embracing a whole county, and in some cases a considerably larger space; but they became more contracted as the work spread, and the preaching places and societies were multiplied. Still, however, the preachers were required to visit in rotation the several towns, villages, and hamlets which were committed to their care, usually preaching every evening, at least, during the week, teaching also from house to house, visiting the sick, meeting the societies, and everywhere maintaining the discipline to which the whole body was pledged. From these stations the preachers were liable to be removed every year; and they seldom remained in any of them more than two years in succession. The same order is observed to this day. Thus the various talents of the preachers were brought to bear upon the different congregations, the peculiar tastes of all were gratified, and the interest of novelty was rendered subservient to the cause of religion. Careless persons, who would not hear a preacher with whose name they were familiar, would often attend the ministry of a stranger; and many in this manner were converted from the error of their way.

It was by means of the annual conferences that the Wesleyan itinerancy was regulated. The first conference was held in London, in the year 1744. It was attended only by six persons five of whom were clergymen. The time of their several meetings was mostly occupied in the

discussion of doctrinal and disciplinary questions, and the best means of extending the work of God. These assemblies have been a means of preserving a uniformity of doctrine and discipline in the body from the beginning. There the characters of the preachers have been examined, differences of theological opinion repressed, the stations of the preachers determined, and their hearts warmed and cheered by mutual consultation and prayer. The power of government, which Mr. Wesley possessed during his life, by his appointment devolved upon the conference after his decease; he having nominated its members, provided for its perpetuity, and defined its powers, by the "Deed of Declaration," of which an account will be given in a subsequent part of this narrative. In this important instrument he has shown his inviolable love of itinerancy, by limiting the power of the conference to appoint preachers to the same chapels to three years in succession. It was his conviction, that it is next to impossible for any man permanently to preserve his ministry in all its spiritual efficiency when he is confined to one congregation.

THE ERECTION OF SEPARATE PLACES OF WORSHIP.

It has been sometimes intimated, that the erection of separate places of worship by the two Wesleys, as well as field-preaching, was occasioned solely by their exclusion from the churches of the Establishment. But this is not a correct view of the subject. They had no right to the general occupancy of the churches; and to several of them they were admitted to the end of their lives, both as a matter of courtesy, and with reference to the spiritual benefit of the people. But had all the churches of the land been open to them, the means which they felt it their duty to adopt, for the revival and extension of Scriptural Christianity, would have rendered other places of worship indispensably necessary. The pulpits of the national

Church could not be occupied by the preachers, travelling and local, whose ministrations the brothers deemed it incumbent upon them to sanction. Accommodation also was wanting for the meeting of societies and classes; for love-feasts, watch-night services, and prayer-meetings; as well as for week-night preaching, and preaching at five o'clock in the morning; all of which they considered necessary in order to the accomplishment of their design.

The first chapel that the Wesleys themselves erected was in Bristol; but the first that they opened for divine worship was in London. The history of this place is not a little curious. The chapel was a large unsightly brick building, near the present site of Finsbury-square, and was known by the name of the Foundry. It had been in the occupation of government, and used for the purpose of casting brass cannon. Its nearness to London rendered it inconvenient in consequence of the crowds of people that assembled to witness the process; and a serious accident having occurred, by which some lives were lost, and several persons greatly injured, the business was transferred to Woolwich; and the premises were leased to Mr. Wesley, who fitted up the principal building as a place of worship. The form and character of the erection were changed, but the name was retained. This chapel was a sort of cathedral in Methodism till the year 1777, when it was superseded by the very commodious and elegant chapel in the City-road, which for many years was not unfrequently called the New Foundry. Behind the old Foundry was Mr. Wesley's dwelling-house, the entry to which was through the gallery of the chapel. Here Mr. Wesley resided when he was in London, and here his venerated mother died in the Lord. At one end of the Foundry was a building of one story, which was occupied as a day-school; in another spacious room was a large electrifying machine, which was used on two days

every week in the case of the afflicted people who resorted thither for relief; and in another the publications of the two brothers, in prose and verse, were kept on sale. At the top of the Foundry was a small bell which was rung as the signal of the preaching at five o'clock in the morning and of other religious services. This part of London was then open, and unfurnished with lamps; and the Methodist people, men and women, were regularly seen at that early hour, during the winter season, selecting their steps by the help of a small lantern, and wending their way to the house of prayer, drawn by the well-known sound, and anticipating those lessons of evangelical instruction which their venerated teachers were accustomed to deliver. Mr. Wesley had often preached his morning sermon, performed his early devotions with his people, and was on his way to distant places in the country, before other people had shaken off their slumbers, and were prepared to apply themselves to the duties of life.

The opening of the Foundry in London, and of the "Room" in Bristol, was soon followed by the Orphan-house in Newcastle; and then by chapels of various dimensions in Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, York, Hull, Birmingham, and other populous towns. In these buildings of primitive Methodism, elegance of architecture was little studied. They were plain and substantial, intended for use, and not for ornament. The most remarkable circumstance connected with them was the amplitude of their accommodation for the poor. The pulpits also were large, and contained a bench of considerable length for the use of the preachers who might be expected successively to address the congregations at the quarterly watch-nights, and other similar services. The preaching in these sanctuaries was plain, pointed, searching, and powerful. The singing was lively; the body of the people generally joined in it; and not a few persons in differ-

ent places were drawn by its sweetness and power to an attendance upon the ministry of the word. The tunes were mostly simple melodies, composed by the old masters, and selected by Mr. Wesley, who published various books of sacred music; and they were sung, if not always according to the rules of art, yet with the spirit and the understanding. The men and women sat apart in the congregation: a practice which Mr. Wesley derived from the Moravians, but which, even in his time, was found to be inconvenient. It was ultimately abandoned. In these assemblies, which were often annoyed by mischievous and riotous people, multitudes of ungodly persons were awakened, converted, regenerated, sanctified, and built up in faith and love.

THE PUBLICATION OF BOOKS.

One of the most important and successful means adopted by the two Wesleys for promoting the interests of religion, was the publication, in a cheap and popular form, of a large number of interesting and instructive books. Before he went to Georgia, Mr. John Wesley, as we have seen, published a single sermon, besides a revised edition of Kempis's "Christian Pattern;" but it was not till after he had returned to England, and obtained the salvation of the gospel through faith in the Lord Jesus, that he was really aware of the power of the press, and began to use it to the full extent of his ability. He then entered upon a course of literary labour of the most gigantic kind, in connection with his incessant travelling, preaching, epistolary correspondence, and the pastoral care of his spiritual children in all parts of the kingdom. At an early period of his public labours, he sent forth three volumes of sermons, explaining, with unrivalled simplicity and strength, the leading doctrines upon which he had been accustomed to preach; and his "Appeals to Men of

Reason and Religion," defending the irregular proceedings into which he had been led, and demonstrating their necessity. Upon the back of this most powerful and impressive volume, Dr. Doddridge wrote the significant exclamation, "How forcible are right words!" These works were attended by an almost incredible number of tracts and pamphlets, original and selected; some of them intended for gratuitous distribution, and all admirably fitted to turn men from sin, and to build them up in holiness.

He published a considerable number of controversial works, in answer to the objections which Dr. Church and others urged against his proceedings and theological views, and in defence of his ministry and character against the reasonings and bitter sarcasms of Bishops Lavington* and Warburton; but it was in practical divinity that he took the greatest delight. That the writings of our elder divines, Puritan and Conformist, might be rendered available to general edification, he published selections from them in fifty volumes, under the title of "A Christian Library," presenting a beautiful and agreeable variety of style and manner, and of biographical, didactic, and practical compositions. After a lapse of several years, this invaluable compilation was succeeded by a monthly magazine, consisting of articles partly original and partly selected; and containing at once "milk" for such as were

* Since Bishop Lavington published his libellous book on Methodism, several works of a somewhat similar character have appeared. The most notorious of these are Nott's Bampton Lectures; Nightingale's Portraiture of Methodism; Dr. Bennett's History of the Dissenters; Philip's Life of Mr. Whitefield; the recent Life of Alexander Kilham; and Conder's Analytical View of all Religions. We enter our protest against all these works, so far as Wesleyan Methodism is concerned. They contain direct and palpable misrepresentations respecting Mr. Wesley and his people; and some of them are highly calumnious. On the other subjects treated of in these volumes we say nothing.

"babes" in understanding and knowledge, and "strong meat" for those that were of riper intellectual age.

To him it was a matter of solid gratification that his ministry, and that of his "fellow-helpers to the truth," roused many a dormant mind to reflection and inquiry; and as it was his anxious wish to raise up an intelligent as well as a holy people, he published concise grammars of the English, French, Latin, and Greek languages; with an epitome of the Roman History. To these he added an abridged History of England, and another of the Christian Church, in four volumes each; besides a Compendium of Natural Philosophy, in five volumes, that peasants and persons of neglected education might have the means of acquiring useful knowledge at the smallest possible expense of time and money. In providing cheap literature, he anticipated the movements of more modern times by many years; and in this kind of service he laboured almost alone for nearly half a century. Moral and sacred poetry he strongly recommended, and published selections of this kind in three volumes; and portable editions of Milton and Young, with notes explaining the difficult passages, and directing attention to the finest paragraphs.

Desirous of promoting, in all his societies, the study of the holy Scriptures, as the source and standard of divine truth, he published, in a quarto volume, an amended translation of the New Testament, with Explanatory Notes, remarkable for their spirituality, terseness, and point. A similar work, but less original in its character, he published on the Old Testament in three quarto volumes. We hazard nothing in saying, that no man ever lived who placed a larger mass of evangelical and useful literature within the reach of the common people. The works which he published were not merely harmless, but beneficial; calculated and intended to make men wise and holy.

Mr. Charles Wesley was an elegant scholar, and pos-

sessed a fine classical taste; but, as a literary man, he engaged in a kind of service very different from that which occupied the more versatile genius of his brother. Prose composition he almost entirely neglected; except that he wrote two sermons for the press,—one on "Awake, thou that sleepest," and the other on earthquakes,—and for many years kept a daily record of passing occurrences. Above almost all men that ever lived, he was the child of feeling; and from the time of his conversion till his fires were quenched in death, he thought and breathed in sacred verse. His was not "made poetry," but "poetry that made itself." It flowed from the depth of his heart in a perennial stream, as clear as it was full and strong. He supplied the Methodists with hymns suited to every occasion, and on all possible subjects connected with their spiritual concerns, and that with an energy, a purity, and a copiousness of diction, and with a richness of evangelical sentiment, of which the Christian Church had perhaps never before seen an equal example. There is scarcely a feeling of the heart in the entire process of salvation, from the first dawn of light upon the understanding, and the incipient sorrows of penitence, to the joys of pardon, the entire sanctification of the soul, and its triumphant entrance into paradise, which he has not expressed in genuine poetry. All that he and his brother taught from the pulpit, of the evil of sin, the glory of Christ, the efficacy of the atonement, the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, "the good fight of faith," the peace and joy of believing, and the ecstatic anticipations of hope, he enabled the people to sing in strains worthy of the brightest days of the primitive church, when she had received the pentecostal baptism of fire. Never were people so favoured with respect to the substance of their psalmody as the Wesleyan connection has always been.

To some persons it may perhaps appear incredible, but

it is, nevertheless, a fact, that, independently of his own original works, which occupy fourteen large octavo volumes, Mr. John Wesley abridged, revised, and printed no fewer than one hundred and seventeen distinct publications, reckoning his Christian Library, his histories, and his philosophy, as only one each; and that the brothers, separately and unitedly, published forty-seven poetical tracts and volumes, most of which were the compositions of Mr. Charles Wesley, and adapted to the use of public, domestic, and private devotion; besides a large number of psalms, which were inserted in the "Arminian Magazine." Apparently without design, Mr. Charles Wesley has anticipated every want of the connection, so far as devotional poetry is concerned. Notwithstanding the difference between his times and the present, there is not a religious service, whether relating to missions, the Christian sacraments, or the ordination of ministers, for which he has not most appropriately provided.

Mr. Charles Wesley was critically acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and had a profound knowledge of theology, as must appear to every attentive reader of his poetry. To a great extent, it forms a beautiful commentary on the Bible.

THE ADOPTION OF A SIMPLE AND IMPRESSIVE MODE OF PREACHING.

When Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, having found what they had long sought—the peace and holiness which are consequent upon the true Christian faith—began to exert themselves to effect a revival of religion in the nation, they adopted a mode of preaching adapted to this end. They laid aside the practice of reading their sermons, and addressed the people from the fulness of their hearts; yet without the slightest approach to rhapsody. The subjects of their ministry were, at first, comparatively

few, but immensely important. True religion, they strenuously, maintained does not consist in right opinions, nor in correct morals, nor in harmlessness of conduct, nor in attendance upon Christian ordinances, necessary as these things are in their several places; but is the life of God in the soul of man; a conformity to the divine image; the love of God and of all mankind for his sake, constantly expressing itself in acts of piety, benevolence, and righteousness. They contended, that of this all mankind are naturally destitute; and that they can attain it in no other way than by believing in Christ. Love to God, which they described as the root and principle of all holiness, they declared to be a grateful affection, arising under the influence of the Holy Spirit, from an assurance of God's love to us; so that justification, and the inward witness of our adoption, precede sanctification, though they are inseparably connected with it. This happiness and purity they declared to be attainable by all men, and attainable now; and hence they offered to the most unworthy of mankind, as the free gift of God, a present salvation from the guilt, the power, and the misery of sin. All believers they exhorted to go on unto perfection; assuring them, upon the testimony of holy Scripture, that they might be saved in this life from all inward, as well as all outward sin; and love God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. The necessity of a holy life, as the fruit of faith, and as emanating from the principle of divine love, they enforced with unceasing earnestness, and with a constant reference to the strict account which every one must soon render to the Judge of quick and dead. The offices of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, in their direct connection with the present and everlasting salvation of mankind, formed the prominent subjects of their ministrations. In Christianity they found a perfect remedy for all the miseries of our fallen world; and hence they

preached under a plenary conviction of the absolute truth of the doctrine which they inculcated, and felt it to be worthy of all acceptation. In these respects their fellow-labourers were like-minded with them. They described the new birth as consisting in an entire change of heart from sin to holiness; and with peculiar earnestness they declared it to be absolutely and universally necessary in order to final salvation. On this vital subject their ministry was marked by an especial solemnity and force.

The principles by which Mr. Wesley was guided, in the formation of his theological views, and the manner in which he endeavoured to teach mankind, he has distinctly stated in the incomparable preface to his Sermons, which he first published in the year 1746. "I design plain truth," says he, "for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life; and in particular, those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity, those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which, to common people, are an unknown tongue."

"To candid, reasonable men I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit, come from God, and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know one thing, the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way: for this very end he came down from heaven. He hath written

it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough me. Let me be *homo unius libri.* Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone. Only God is here. In his presence I open, I read this book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights, 'Lord, is it not thy word, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally, and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do, let me know thy will.' I then search after, and consider, parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remain, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby being dead they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

With respect to the right manner of preaching, he thus speaks in his notes on our Lord's sermon upon the mount: "Through this whole discourse we cannot but observe the most exact method which can possibly be conceived. Every paragraph, every sentence, is closely connected with that which precedes, and that which follows it. And is not this the pattern to every Christian preacher? If any, then, are able to follow it without any premeditation, well; if not, let them not dare to preach without it. No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, comes from the Spirit of Christ."

Mr. Wesley has recorded his sentiments with respect to the style in the preface to the second series of his Sermons, which he published in 1788, only three years before he died. "Is there need," says he, "to apologize to sensible persons for the plainness of my style? A gentleman

whom I much love and respect lately informed me, with much tenderness and courtesy, that men of candour made great allowance for the decay of my faculties, and did not expect me to write now, either with regard to sentiment or language, as I did thirty or forty years ago. Perhaps they are decayed, though I am not conscious of it. But is not this a fit occasion to explain myself concerning the style I use from choice, not necessity? I could even now write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. B——.* But I dare not, because I seek the honour that cometh of God only! What is the praise of man to me, that have one foot in the grave, and am stepping into the land whence I shall not return? Therefore I dare no more write in a fine style than wear a fine coat. But were it otherwise, had I time to spare, I should still write just as I do; I should purposely decline what many admire—a highly ornamented style. I cannot relish French oratory. I despise it from my heart. Let those that please be in raptures at the pretty elegant sentences of Massillon or Bordaloue; but give me the plain, nervous style of Dr. South, Dr. Bates, or Mr. John Howe: and for elegance, show me any French writer who exceeds Dean Young, or Mr. Seed. Let who will admire the French frippery; I am still for plain, sound English.

"I think a preacher or writer of sermons has lost his way when he imitates any of the French orators; even the most famous of them; even Massillon, or Bourdaloue. Only let his language be plain, proper, and clear, and it is enough. God himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and the manner. 'If any man speak' in the name of God, 'let him speak as the oracles of God.' And if he would imitate any part of these above the rest, let it be the first epistle of St. John. This is the style, the

* Dr. Blair is most probably the writer here intended.

most excellent style for every gospel preacher. And let him aim at no more ornament than he finds in that sentence which is the sum of the whole gospel, 'We love him, because he first loved us.'"

The Wesleys preached and exhorted, that they might make the most unlettered of their hearers understand the true nature of Christianity, and induce them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; and they felt that unless they succeeded in this, they only spent their strength for naught. They engaged in the duties of the ministry under a deep sense of their responsibility both to God and man, and left all self-display and artificial modes of address to the vain men who seek their reward in popular admiration.

Mr. John Wesley's gigantic labours excited the kind sympathy of one of the Irish prelates, who ordained Mr. Thomas Maxfield, the first of the lay-preachers, priest; saying, at the same time, "Mr. Maxfield, I ordain you to assist that good man, (Mr. Wesley,) that he may not work himself to death."

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVIVAL AND SPREAD OF RELIGION THROUGH THE LABOURS OF THE TWO WESLEYS, AND OF THEIR COADJUTORS.

Among other significant directions which Mr. Wesley gave to his preachers was this:—"Go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most." He adopted the same principle as the rule of his own proceedings; and hence he went, not to those places where he was likely to meet with a kind reception, but where the people were the most ignorant, wicked and neglected. In those times the criminal law of England was terribly

sanguinary. Executions were numerous and frequent; and to the end of their lives the brothers were in the habit of visiting convicts under sentence of death, and of affectionately pointing them to the throne of the divine mercy, from which no penitent and believing suppliant was ever sent empty away. They felt that Christ's atonement met all the necessities of the most guilty and abject of mankind. With the same feeling they visited, in the first instance, the most wretched of the uninstructed masses in the mining and manufacturing districts, and then the more scattered population in other parts of the land. It often happened that their clerical garb failed entirely to secure for them the slightest respect, and their lives were in the greatest jeopardy. In not a few instances the clergy, forgetting what was becoming in the character which they sustained, were directly concerned in exciting the hostility of mobs against them, particularly in Staffordshire; and at Epworth, the clergyman, in a state of drunkenness, assaulted Mr. Wesley before a thousand people, assembled together in the church, and drove him away from the Lord's table, because he preached in the fields. Yet the brothers, with admirable calmness and fidelity, pursued their course of duty "through good report, and through evil report;" and lived to see nearly the whole land, including the Isle of Man, and the Norman islands, divided into circuits, and regularly occupied by their zealous, intrepid, and self-denying fellow-labourers. Numerous societies were also formed, the members of which, submitting to a system of godly discipline and order, were everywhere seen "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

Perhaps the most distinguished and honourable convert of whom the devoted brothers could boast was their venerable mother; a woman of great personal beauty, of high moral worth, and of a very strong and cultivated mind.

On the third of September, 1739, Mr. John Wesley says, "I talked largely with my mother, who told me that, till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned, as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words, in delivering the cup to me *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee*, the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven *me* all *my* sins.'

"I asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith; and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, he had it himself; and declared a little before his death, that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all, of his being accepted in the Beloved; but that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it. Whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few; not as promised to all the people of God."*

A few days after this conversation she accompanied her son John to Kennington, and heard him preach in the open air to about twenty thousand people. About three years afterward, she died in the faith and hope of the gospel; having "no doubt, or fear, nor any desire (but as soon as God should call) to depart and to be with Christ." "On the day of her death," says Mr. John Wesley, "I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bedside. She was in her last conflict, unable to speak, but, I believe, quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while

* Works, vol. iii, p. 152, Am. edit.

we commended her soul to God. From three to four the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech, 'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'"

Having given an account of her funeral, he adds, "We set up a plain stone at the head of her grave, inscribed with the following words:—'Here lies the body of Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the youngest and last surviving daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley,

"'In sure and certain hope to rise,
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh lay down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.

"'True daughter of affliction, she
Inured to pain and misery,
Mourn'd a long night of griefs and fears,
A legal night of seventy years.

"'The Father then reveal'd his Son,
Him in the broken bread made known:
She knew and felt her sins forgiven,
And found the earnest of her heaven.

"'Meet for the fellowship above,
She heard the call, Arise, my love!
I come, her dying looks replied,
And lamblike as her Lord she died.'"

By some writers these lines have been severely criticised, as not doing justice to the high intellectual character of this very excellent woman; and by others they have been praised for their poetic beauty. The most obvious circumstance connected with them is, that they present a correct and striking picture of the minds of the two brothers, by whom they were used. These men of taste and

of cultivated understanding knew her high mental character better than any of her modern admirers; for she had been the best earthly "guide of their youth;" but they knew that, through life, with all her sincerity, she had fallen short of the full Christian salvation, not having even dared to ask of God the direct and abiding witness of her adoption. That she had at last obtained this pearl of great price, and with her latest breath declared its reality and value, was to them an occasion of holy gratitude and rejoicing. Had their revered mother possessed the intellect of Bacon or of Newton, their glorying on her account would still have been, that Christ was formed in her heart by faith; and that she had borne a clear and distinct witness to the truth of that neglected doctrine which it was the chief business of their lives to promulgate. With St. Paul, they resolved to "know nothing," comparatively, not even intellect, or literature, or philosophy, "but Christ and him crucified." With respect to sentiment, Mrs. Wesley's epitaph is such a one as Ignatius or Polycarp might have written. It is Christian all over.

In the early part of their itinerant ministry the two Wesleys visited Wales, where they found Mr. Howell Harris, an educated layman, successfully engaged in the same service. His views of Christian theology were Calvinistic; and hence he rather laboured in connection with Mr. Whitefield than with them; yet they were all of one heart, though not of one judgment, on every subject. They cultivated each other's friendship, and for many years were the helpers of each other's joy. After Mr. Harris had laboured with uncommon zeal and effect, chiefly in the principality, to bring sinners to Christ, he for a time sunk into a state of dejection and comparative inactivity, from which Mr. Charles Wesley endeavoured to rouse him by the following stirring epistle, which we believe was never

before printed. It is a fine illustration of the writer's mighty faith and burning love.

AN EPISTLE TO HOWELL HARRIS, FROM THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

Received March 3, 1755.

Awake, old soldier! to the fight half-won,
And put thy strength, and put thine armour on!
Nor dream thyself a vessel cast aside,
Broken by stubborn will, and marr'd by pride.
Most proud, self-will'd and wrathful as thou art,
Yet God hath surely seen thy simple heart,
Quench'd with his blood the oft-rekindled fires,
Nor left thee [ever] to thy vain desires;
But saved ten thousand times from Satan's power,
And snatch'd thee from the gulf wide-yawning to devour.

Then let our Saviour-God have all the praise,
And humbly call to mind the former days,
When He who waked thy soul to second birth
Sent forth a new-born child to shake the earth,
To tear the prey out of the lion's teeth,
And spoil the trembling realms of hell and death;
By violent faith to seize the kingdom given,
And open burst the gates of vanquish'd heaven.

Still doth thy lingering indolence require
A pattern fair to set thy soul on fire?
Behold his shining footsteps from afar,
And trace with me that thunderbolt of war!
Legions of fiends and men in vain oppose;
A single champion, 'gainst a world of foes,
He rushes on, the bloody sign lifts up,
And shouts exulting from the mountain top!
His voice the strongest holds of hell o'erturns,
His word as fire in the dry stubble burns,
Impetuous as a torrent pours along,
Or blasts like lightning the rebellious throng.
Smote by his sling, and scatter'd by his eye,
Goliath falls, and the Philistines fly;
Where'er he turns, appall'd with sudden dread
Flies the foul monster vice, and hides his head;

Satan, with all his wicked spirits, gives place,
And mourns his works destroy'd before the stripling's face.

Who is this stripling? (let my friend inquire,)
So void of fear, so full of heavenly fire?
Say, hast thou ever known him? Search and try,
And read his features with a curious eye;
Mark well his love, simplicity, and zeal,
And tell thy heart—if thou be HARRIS still.

If thou art HARRIS still, awake, arise,
Renew the fight, relabour up the skies,
But first thyself with deep abhorrence see,
And humbly own, "The Saviour wants not thee;"
Able from other quicken'd stones to raise
Children of God, and instruments of grace.
He knows to baffle and abase the proud,
And justly styles himself the jealous God;
Nor will his glory to another give,
Or share with worms his high prerogative.
"There is none God but God:" let all confess
The Father's fulness in the Prince of peace.
Fall every soul before Emmanuel's throne,
And cry, "Exalted be the Lord alone."

Allows my Howell's heart the Saviour's claim?
Bows all within thee to the awful name?
Who honour'st Him thou must thyself despise,
Thou must be poor and vile in thy own eyes;
Vile dust and sinful ashes, beast and fiend!
By thee and me shall the Redeemer send?
Is His great Spirit bound? or unconfined?
Restrain'd to us, or free for all mankind?
Freely he works, if thou and I stand still;
Blows as he lists, and sends by whom he will;
Chooses the weak, the foolish and the base,
To preach his gospel, and advance his praise;
To blast the strong, deject the towering thought,
Confound the wise, and bring the great to naught:
That none may arrogate Jehovah's right
Nor flesh presume to boast in Jesus' glorious sight.

Purged from all self-esteem and self-regard,
A vessel for the master's use prepared,

Conscious of all thy weaknesses and wants,
The chief of sinners, and the least of saints,
Go forth a witness of th' atoning Lamb,
Go forth, completely arm'd with Jesus' name.
Trust in his name, for thou hast proved him true;
And, waiting on thy Lord, thy strength renew.
He looks thee back thy strength: the gift receive,
And, daily dying, by the gospel live.
Live for His sake who bled upon the cross;
Live, to be sacrificed for Jesus' cause.
When thou the travail of thy soul hast seen,
More outcasts found, and forced them to come in,
To feel the virtue of the gospel word,
And know and glorify their pard'ning Lord;
When thou the work assign'd hast fully done,
And made the Saviour's grace to thousands known;
Commanded then with triumph to remove,
Incline thy head, like Him who reigns above,
And die to pay him back his dear, expiring love.

It was by the instrumentality of Howell Harris that Mr. Marmaduke Gwynne, of Garth, in Wales, was brought to the knowledge of the truth. His house was for some years a home to the Wesleys, when they visited the principality; and as he was a magistrate, he was able to afford them protection against mobs and persecuting individuals. The daughter of Mr. Gwynne afterward became the wife of Mr. Charles Wesley, whom she survived many years.

The work which spread with rapidity at home, also broke out in the British army, then serving in Flanders. John Haime, belonging to the Queen's Regiment of dragoons, having been brought to the knowledge of God in England, was stirred up to preach to his companions in arms, many of whom were grossly wicked. The consequence was, that some hundreds of them were converted, and united together in religious society. John often preached from twenty to thirty times in a week, and was so intent upon promoting the spiritual good of others as

often to forget to take his necessary food. The following extract from his Life will serve to show something of his spirit, and that of his brethren:—"On the 1st of May, 1745, we had a full trial of our faith at Fontenoy. Some days before, one of our brethren, standing at his tent-door, broke out into raptures of joy, knowing his departure was at hand; and when he went into the field of battle declared, 'I am going to rest in the bosom of Jesus.' Indeed, this day God was pleased to prove our little flock, and to show them his mighty power. They showed such courage and boldness in the fight as made the officers, as well as soldiers, amazed. When wounded, some cried out, 'I am going to my Beloved.' Others, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' And many that were not wounded earnestly desired to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. When William Clements had his arm broken by a musket-ball, they would have carried him out of the battle; but he said, 'No; I have an arm left to hold my sword: I will not go yet.' When a second shot broke his other arm, he said, 'I am as happy as I can be out of paradise.' John Evans, having both his legs taken off by a cannon-ball, was laid across a cannon to die; where, as long as he could speak, he was praising God with joyful lips.

"For my own part, I stood the hottest fire of the enemy for about seven hours. But I told my comrades, 'The French have no ball made that will kill me this day.' After about seven hours, a cannon-ball killed my horse under me. An officer cried out aloud, 'Haime, where is your God now?' I answered, 'Sir, he is here with me; and he will bring me out of this battle.' Presently a cannon-ball took off his head. My horse fell upon me, and some cried out, 'Haime is gone!' But I replied, 'He is not gone yet.' I soon disengaged myself, and walked on praising God. I was exposed both to the enemy, and to our own horse; but that did not discourage me at all; for

I knew the God of Jacob was with me. I had a long way to go through all our horse; the balls flying on every side. And all the way lay multitudes bleeding, groaning, or just dead. Surely I was as in the fiery furnace; but it did not singe a hair of my head. The hotter the battle grew, the more strength was given me. I was as full of joy as I could contain. As I was quitting the field I met one of our brethren with a little dish in his hand, seeking water. I did not know him at first, being covered with blood. He smiled, and said, 'Brother Haime, I have got a sore wound.' I asked, 'Have you got Christ in your heart?' He said, 'I have, and I have had him all this day. I have seen many good and glorious days, with much of God, but I never saw more of it than this day. Glory be to God for all his mercies!' Among the dead there was great plenty of watches, and of gold and silver. One asked, 'Will you not get something?' I answered, 'No: I have got Christ. I will have no plunder.'"*

Next to their own country, the sympathies of the brothers were awakened in behalf of Ireland, where Protestantism had fallen into a profound sleep, under the shade of the civil power; and popery, ever watchful and active for the attainment of its own worldly and selfish ends, was rapidly leading the body of the population into superstition and sin. After visiting the principal counties in England, Mr. John Wesley went to Ireland, in the year 1747, as a preacher of righteousness, where he met at once with formidable opposition and encouraging success. He was immediately followed by his brother, who preached with equal zeal and power in several of the most important towns, unmoved by the Romish mobs, some of which seemed determined to shed his blood. Some of his escapes were all but miraculous. After patient perseverance

* Experience of Early Methodist Preachers, p. 35–37.

their object was gained. Preachers were stationed in several of the principal towns; circuits and societies were formed; a standard was raised against the farther encroachments of anti-christian error; many thousands of nominal Christians became the spiritual worshippers of God; and not a few of the deluded Romanists were not only taught to distinguish between the religion of Christ, and the commandments of men, but believed in the Lord Jesus to the saving of the soul.

For several years Mr. Charles Wesley occasionally visited Ireland, where his energetic ministry was signally owned of God in the conversion of men. His brother was accustomed to visit it to the end of his life. Sometimes they were rudely treated by the populace, who were anxious to resist all religious and moral innovations, and perpetuate the existence of popery and crime. Once Mr. Charles Wesley, with several of the preachers, had the honour of being presented by the grand jury of Cork as a "rogue and a vagabond." Yet these venerable men found an ample reward in the good which was manifestly done through their instrumentality. An efficient native ministry was raised up; a distinct, though not an independent, religious connection was formed; so that the Irish Methodists had their own annual conference, became a distinguished part of the Methodist body, and have had the gratification of presenting to the Wesleyan itinerancy some of its most able and useful ministers. Among these may be mentioned the revered names of Thomas Walsh, William Myles, Walter Griffith, and Adam Clarke; to say nothing of several who are now alive, and are serving their generation, by the will of God, both at home and in the wide field of missions.

When Mr. Wesley first visited Ireland, the Protestant church there, with a few honourable exceptions, was in a sad state of lukewarmness and indifference. Many of the

clergy were criminally supine and inactive; and not a few of the evils which the good Bishop Bedell, a hundred years before had in vain sought to remedy, existed in undiminished power, and were in active operation. While Mr. Wesley called the people to repentance, and enforced the necessity of spiritual religion, as opposed to mere opinions and forms of worship, he administered reproof to his clerical brethren in a manner the most delicate and inoffensive, yet with great affection and faithfulness. His manner of doing this was somewhat singular. He published a small tract, entitled, "A Short Method of Converting all the Roman Catholics in the Kingdom of Ireland, humbly proposed to the bishops and clergy of that kingdom." The "method" indeed appeared very "short" and simple. The detail of the plan occupied only a few pages. But the proposal itself was nothing less than a return, on the part of the great body of the clergy, to the true apostolical spirit, doctrine, and practice.

"It is a melancholy consideration," says he, "to those who love the Protestant interest, that so small a part of this nation is yet reformed from popery. They cannot observe without a sensible concern, that, in many parts of the kingdom, there are still ten, nay, fifteen, perhaps upward of twenty, papists to one Protestant. Nor can they see any prospect of its being otherwise; few papists being brought over to our church, notwithstanding all the methods which have been used, while many Protestants are seduced from it.

"Yet they cannot but earnestly desire that all the papists were convinced of their errors. How much would this redound to the glory of God, who willeth all to come to the knowledge of his truth! How greatly would it advantage their own souls, both in this world and in the world to come! What an advantage would it be to the kingdom in general, to be no longer divided against itself,

to have the grand cause of contention removed, and all its inhabitants of one heart and one mind! And how highly would it advance both the honour and interest of our gracious sovereign, to have all his subjects cordially united together, thinking and speaking the same thing!

"Why, then, is not this desirable end pursued with a vigour proportionable to its importance? Is it because we despair of any success, because we think it impossible to be attained? But why should we imagine it to be impossible? A common and plausible answer is, 'Because the papists are so bigoted to their clergy; believing all they affirm, however contrary both to Scripture and reason, and doing all that they direct; whom they generally believe to be the holiest and wisest of men.'

"Undoubtedly this is a considerable difficulty in the way. And yet I cannot think it is insurmountable. Still I conceive it is possible to convince all the papists, provided there are proper instruments for the work. And what instruments are so proper as the clergy? not only as they are in every place, distributed through the whole nation, and always ready on the spot for the work; but likewise, as it more immediately belongs to them; as it is no inconsiderable branch of their business who are peculiarly set apart to watch over the souls of men as they must give account.

"But what way can the clergy take, with any probability of success? There is one way, and one only; one that will (not probably, but) infallibly succeed. If this way is taken, I am willing to stake my life upon the success of it. And it is a plain, simple way, such as may be taken by any man, though but of a small capacity. For it requires no peculiar depth of understanding, no extraordinary height of learning; but only a share of common sense, and an honest, upright heart.

"It was observed that the grand difficulty of the work

lies in the strong attachment of the papists to their clergy. Here, therefore, we are to begin; we are to strike at the root; and if this bigotry be but removed, whatever error or superstition is built upon it will fall to the ground.

"Now this may be effectually done thus:—The papists themselves allow, that one set of clergy were holier and wiser even than their own, namely, the apostles. They allow these both to have lived and preached better than the present clergy even of the Roman Church.

"Here, therefore, is the short and sure method. Let all the clergy of the Church of Ireland only *live* like the apostles, and *preach* like the apostles, and the thing is done.

"The Romans, on the same ground that they prefer the apostles before their own clergy, will then prefer ours before them; and when they once do this, when we have carried this point, when their attachment to our clergy is stronger than that to their own, they will be convinced by hundreds, till there is not a Roman left in the kingdom of Ireland."*

The writer then goes on to describe the manner in which the apostles lived and preached,—their life of faith, and of active, burning love; their self-denial, and holy circumspection; their temperance, zeal, and charity; their boldness and fidelity in the cause of Christ; their strenuous inculcation of those capital truths, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; the necessity of the new birth; and holiness of life, flowing from a new nature, the effect of the Holy Spirit's operation. The advice thus given about the middle of the last century has been more recently adopted by the Irish clergy, to a considerable extent, and with the results which Mr. Wesley declared would follow. It is, however, lamentable to find that some of the persons, to whom this description for-

* Works, vol. v, pp. 795, 796, Am. edit.

merly applied, seem to be, at present, determined, in the plenitude of their angry zeal for certain peculiarities of theological opinion, to frown down the faithful men who were in the field before them, and to whom they themselves are under the deepest obligations. These are not now the ministers whom Mr. Wesley describes. The apostles loved all the friends of their great Master, and rejoiced whenever he was preached. Had Mr. Wesley's suggestions been generally regarded at an earlier period, many of the evils which have afflicted Ireland would have been happily prevented. His labours were as patriotic as they were benevolent and pious.

Though the personal ministry of the Wesleys was confined to the United Kingdom, their influence soon extended to distant nations. Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, having emigrated to America, settled in New-York, where he began to preach the truth of God. In the year 1766, he formed a society there, consisting doubtless of persons who had been converted through his labours. They erected a chapel for their own accommodation, and that others also might statedly hear the word of life. About the same time, Captain Webb, an officer in the British army, and a zealous preacher, visited New-York and several other places, where the people wondered to see a man in military uniform, and bearing a sword, occupying the pulpit, and with great power and earnestness calling sinners to repentance. Many were deeply impressed under his word. Some time after, Mr. Strawbridge, another local preacher from Ireland, settled in Maryland, where he pursued the same course as that which his brethren had adopted in New-York and its neighbourhood. He preached to the people with holy unction, formed a society, and, with the assistance of its members and of other well-disposed persons, built a log chapel for the public benefit. He was followed by

Mr. Williams, who travelled largely through the country, spreading the Wesleyan publications wherever he went; and by Mr. John King, from England, who publicly enforced the truth which he had received. The unpretending labours of these devout men were crowned with success. Several were convinced of sin, and brought into Christian light and liberty; and some of the young converts, constrained by the love of Christ, began to teach others the nature and blessedness of true religion, and the way to attain it.

In the year 1769 we find the following entry in the Minutes of Conference:—"We have a pressing call from our brethren at New-York, (who have built a preaching-house,) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go? *A.* Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmoor. *Q.* What can we do further in token of our brotherly love? *A.* Let us now make a collection among ourselves. This was immediately done; and out of it fifty pounds were allotted toward the payment of their debt, and about twenty given to our brethren for their passage." This was in all probability the very first collection ever made among the Methodists for a directly missionary purpose. It was raised in the conference, and amounted to the goodly sum of seventy pounds, which was applied in the manner here specified. It is worthy of remark, that in the old chapel at Leeds the first Methodist missionaries received their appointment, and the first missionary collection was made; and that, after a lapse of more than sixty years, the first Methodist missionary meeting was held under the same roof.

Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, with those who were in the field before them, went abroad in various directions preaching the word. Yet they were not able to meet the spiritual necessities of the people; so that in the Minutes of 1771 it is said, "Our brethren in America call aloud

for help. Who are willing to go over and help them? *A.* Five were willing. The two appointed were Francis Asbury and Richard Wright." Within a few years they were followed by George Shadford, Thomas Rankin, Martin Rodda, and James Dempster; some of whom returned to England on the breaking out of the revolutionary war. Mr. Asbury found an asylem in the house of a powerful and influential friend; and the native preachers pursued their evangelical labours, with zeal and perseverance, unappalled by either local opposition, or popular alarm. One of their number, Mr. Freeborn Garrettson, a man of a fine spirit, and of apostolic piety and zeal, says, "Amidst the clash of war, God in a glorious manner prospered his work in awakening and converting thousands of souls; so that in process of time the peninsula became comparatively as the garden of the Lord. There was a blessed work among the African slaves; and in no part of my labours have I had more delightful seasons than I had in preaching to them." Thus "they went forth in the power of the Spirit, disseminating divine truth, and suffering much persecution and many privations."*

While this work was in progress in America, Dr. Thomas Coke, a clergyman of the Church of England, and a member of the University of Oxford, resigned his curacy of South Petherton, and connected himself with Mr. Wesley, to serve him as a son in the gospel. His union with the Methodist body was most seasonable and advantageous. Under the direction of Mr. Wesley, he took the superintendence of the foreign work; and for many years was such an example of missionary zeal and enterprise as the Christian church has rarely seen. His services, in connection with the Methodist missions, were marked by an energy, disinterestedness, and perseverance

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, vol. i, pp. 675, 676.

which can never be forgotten; and in importance and success they were second only to those of the venerated man whom he owned as his father in the Lord.

On the cessation of the American war, and the acknowledgment of the independence of the United States, Mr. Wesley gave to his societies there the form and character of a church; having in itself all the ordinances of Christianity. For this proceeding he was severely censured at the time; but the result has shown that he was guided by a sound discretion, and formed a just estimate of the religious necessities of that country. The measure has already been attended with the most important spiritual benefits to millions of people; and unborn generations will doubtless derive from it the highest advantages. The whole affair is thus recorded by himself in the Minutes of Conference:—

"What is the state of our societies in North America? *A.* It may best appear from the following letter:—*

"*Bristol, Sept.* 10, 1784.

"TO DR. COKE, MR. ASBURY, AND OUR BRETHREN, IN NORTH AMERICA.

"1. By an uncommon train of providences many of the provinces of North America are totally disjointed from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and

* "If any one is minded to dispute concerning diocesan episcopacy, he may dispute. But I have better work."

in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"2. Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church,' convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the National Church to which I belonged.

"3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or administer the Lord's supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end: and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, to act as elders among them by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted National Church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use, on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"5. If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the

wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"6. It has been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers in America. But to this I object, (1.) I desired the bishop of London to ordain only one; but could not prevail. (2.) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3.) If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! (4.) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

From the time at which these arrangements were carried into practical effect, the work of God in America prospered beyond all former example. Everywhere there was a rapid increase of native preachers, who followed the scattered population through immense districts of country, not forgetting the African slaves; and outcasts, for whom no man had previously cared, were gathered into the church by thousands. "The wilderness and the solitary place" were literally "glad for" these itinerant evangelists; and the moral "desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose." "Thanksgiving and the voice of melody" were heard in the deep and lonely forest; and spiritual enjoyments, the effects of divine truth, and of that "great grace" which was upon them, everywhere cheered the people under all their privations and labour.

In no part of the world have the Wesleyan teaching and discipline been of more signal benefit than among the negroes in the West India islands, formerly a scene of

the most cruel oppressions. Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., the speaker in the house of assembly in Antigua, coming to England for the recovery of his impaired health, was led to attend the ministry of Mr. Wesley, which he found to be the power of God to the salvation of his soul. Happy in the enjoyment of the divine favour, and full of holy zeal, he returned to Antigua in the year 1760. Regardless of popular opinion and prejudice, and feeling that the bond and the free are all one in Christ, he began to teach Christianity to the African slaves, many of whom, by the blessing of God upon his instrumentality, were made the Lord's free men. Nearly two hundred persons were united together in holy fellowship under his superintendence. These were his joy and crown, while profane men, enemies of religion, justice, and humanity, treated him with bitter hostility for thus attempting to raise the negro character, and arrest the progress of ungodliness and crime. While thus usefully and honourably employed, he was mysteriously called away by death; and the children of his pious exertions were left as sheep without a shepherd.

Yet the little flock were not finally forsaken. The dock-yard at Antigua being in want of shipwrights, application was made to the government at home for some suitable persons to be sent thither from England. Among the persons selected was John Baxter, of the royal dock at Chatham, who had been connected with the Methodist society about twelve years, and had also for some time been a class-leader and a local preacher. On his arrival he collected the remains of the society which had been formed by Mr. Gilbert; and writing to Mr. Wesley under the date of April 2d, 1778, he says, "The work that God began by Mr. Gilbert is still remaining. The black people have been kept together by two black women, who have continued praying and meeting with those who attended every night. I preached to about thirty on Satur-

day night; on Sunday morning, to about the same number; and in the afternoon of the same day to about four or five hundred. The old members desire that I would inform you, that you have many children in Antigua, whom you never saw. I hope we shall have an interest in your prayers, and that our Christian brethren will pray for us."*

For about eight years this holy and indefatigable man continued his labours before the arrival of missionaries to assist him. During this period he worked in the dock-yard during the day, and in the evening and on Sundays taught Christianity to the people; and with such success that about two thousand persons were united together in religious society. Such an example reminds us of St. Paul, who, when it was necessary, laboured with his own hands, that he might support himself, and those that were with him, while at the same time he was "making many rich" in spiritual knowledge and blessings.

The manner in which Mr. Baxter obtained help, and by means of which a permanent form was given to the West India mission, was equally providential and unexpected. Dr. Coke had embarked in September, 1786, for Nova Scotia, attended by three missionaries, Messrs. Warrener, Hammet, and Clarke. Mr. Warrener was appointed to the West Indies by Mr. Wesley; and it was designed that he should sail thither from North America. It was intended that the doctor should fix the other two in the most necessitous and promising stations which might come under his notice. The voyage itself was most afflicting and calamitous; but its results were happy beyond expression. The vessel, during the greater part of its attempt to reach the destined port, was exposed to tempests which threatened nothing less than destruction; and at different times scarcely the slightest hope of preservation

* Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 168, Am. edit.

remained. The ship, having arrived on the banks of Newfoundland, was already more than half a wreck; the company on board were placed on a reduced allowance of water; and as there was no probability of landing where they had intended, they resolved to alter their course, and endeavour to reach the West Indies. Scarcely had they given a new direction to their movements, than, to use the doctor's own expression, it seemed as if angels blew the gale, and they were carried directly to Antigua, where Mr. Baxter was labouring alone, and the Lord Jesus had merciful designs toward the neglected people. Here they safely landed on the morning of Christmas-day; and on walking up the town of St. John, the doctor met Mr. Baxter on his way to the chapel, for the purpose of conducting the worship of God, and of inviting the attention of the people to the advent of the Messiah. They were unknown to each other, except by reputation; but when their names were announced, they embraced each other with a strength of affection, and a feeling of joyous surprise, which can be more readily conceived than expressed. On that memorable day the doctor twice occupied Mr. Baxter's pulpit, and also administered the Lord's supper to the people. During his stay in the West Indies, which continued about six weeks, the doctor was received with the utmost cordiality. He was once invited to a public dinner, at which the duke of Clarence, afterward William IV., was present; and had the offer of a salary of five hundred pounds per annum if he would remain in Antigua. But, like his revered father in the gospel, he was too intent upon the spread of Christ's religion in the world to confine his labours to any one place. He visited several of the islands, that he might know from actual inspection the openings which they presented for missionary labour; and having fixed Mr. Warrener at Antigua, Mr. Clarke at St. Vincent's, and Mr. Hammet at St. Christopher's, he

sailed for the American continent. From this time the Wesleyan mission in the West Indies was carried on with increasing success. It had obtained too deep a hold upon the heart of Dr. Coke, to be ever either forgotten or neglected. The mission, begun under these circumstances, has been a means of salvation to many thousands of redeemed men; and with the faithful co-operation of other bodies of Christians, it has given freedom in those beautiful colonies to nearly a million of human beings, once the most oppressed and degraded of their race. For it is not conceivable that West India slavery would at this day have been extinct, had it not been for the Christian training which many of the negroes received, and for the publicity which the Christian missions gave to their oppressions and wrongs. A skeptic may perhaps doubt whether there was any thing peculiar in the successive storms which drove Dr. Coke and his fellow-missionaries so widely out of their course; but the man who seriously believes his Bible can scarcely forbear to say, "This was the finger of God!" Little did Dr. Coke, and the three devoted men who sailed with him, imagine, during their perilous voyage, that they were destined to lay the foundation of a work in the West Indies, which, in the comparatively short period of fifty years, should accomplish the extinction of slavery. To teach the slaves contentment, and conduct them to a world where the voice of the oppressor is never heard, were the only objects for which they even dared to hope.

The anticipated mission to the British provinces of North America was not forgotten, though it was not begun by the men whom Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke had intended for that service. In Nova-Scotia, Mr. Black, an emigrant from England, having obtained the blessing of a personal acceptance with God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, began to recommend to others what he him-

self had found. He was soon after assisted and encouraged in his work by a visit from Freeborn Garrettson. A mission was also commenced about the same time in Newfoundland, by Mr. John M'Geary; so that before Mr. Wesley went to his reward, besides the Methodist Church in the United States, nineteen missionaries were employed under his direction in the West Indies, and in British North America.

As he advanced in life, he contemplated the success of this great work, both at home and abroad, with increasing delight and gratitude. In the year 1777, he laid the foundation of a new chapel in the City-road, London, to be used instead of the Foundry, which he and his fellow-labourers had occupied from the beginning. On this occasion he preached and published a sermon, in which he makes the following remarks:—"Methodism, so called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive church, the religion of the Church of England. This old religion is no other than love, the love of God, and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us,—as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul. This love is the great medicine of life; the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world; for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand; there is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God; and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This religion of love, and joy, and peace, has its seat in the inmost soul; but is ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing up, not only in all innocence, (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour,) but likewise in every

kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it.

"Just at the time when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance. Many thousands gathered together to hear them; and in every place where they came, many began to show such a concern for religion as they never had done before. Many were in a short time deeply convinced of the number and heinousness of their sins, of their evil tempers, of their inability to help themselves, and of the insignificancy of their outside religion. And from this repentance sprang fruits meet for repentance. The whole form of their life was changed. They ceased to do evil, and learned to do well. Neither was this all; but over and above this outward change, they began to experience inward religion. The love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, which they enjoy to this day. They love him, because he first loved us; and this love constrains them to love all mankind, and inspires them with every holy and heavenly temper, with the mind which was in Christ. Hence it is that they are now uniform in their behaviour, unblameable in all manner of conversation; and in whatsoever state they are, they have learned therewith to be content. Thus they calmly travel on through life, never repining, or murmuring, or dissatisfied, till the hour comes that they shall drop this covering of earth, and return to the Father of spirits.

"This revival of religion has spread to such a degree as neither we nor our fathers had known. How *extensive* has it been! There is scarce a considerable town in the kingdom, where some have not been made witnesses of it. It has spread to every age and sex, to most orders and degrees of men; and even to abundance of those who, in time past, were accounted monsters of wickedness.

"Consider the *swiftness* as well as the extent of it. In what age has such a number of sinners been recovered, in so short a time, from the error of their ways? When has true religion, I will not say since the Reformation, but since the time of Constantine the Great, made so large a progress in any nation, within so small a space? I believe, hardly can ancient or modern history afford a parallel instance.

"We may likewise observe the *depth* of the work so extensively and swiftly wrought. Multitudes have been thoroughly convinced of sin; and shortly after, so filled with joy and love, that whether they were in the body, or out of the body, they could hardly tell; and in the power of this love they have trampled under foot whatever the world accounts either terrible or desirable, having evidenced, in the severest trials, an invariable and tender good will to mankind, and all the fruits of holiness. Now, so deep a repentance, so strong a faith, so fervent a love, so unblemished holiness, wrought in so many persons in so short a time, the world has not seen for many ages.

"No less remarkable is the *purity* of the religion which has extended itself so deeply and swiftly. I speak particularly as to the doctrines held by those who are the subjects of it. Those of the Church of England, at least, must acknowledge this; for where is there a body of people who, number for number, so closely adhere to the doctrines of the Church?

"Nor is their religion more pure from heresy than it is from *superstition*. In former times, wherever any unusual religious concern has appeared, there has sprung up with it a zeal for things which were no part of religion. But it has not been so in the present case. No stress has been laid on any thing, as though it was necessary to salvation, but what is plainly contained in the word of God. And of the things contained therein, the stress laid

on each has been in proportion to the nearness of its relation to what is there laid down as the sum of all,—the love of God and our neighbour. So pure both from superstition and error is the religion which has lately spread in this nation.

"It is likewise *rational*. It is as pure from enthusiasm as from superstition. It is true, the contrary has been continually affirmed; but to affirm is one thing, to prove is another. Who will prove that it is enthusiasm to love God? yea, to love him with all our heart? Who is able to make good this charge against the love of all mankind? (I do but just touch upon the general heads.) But if you cannot make it good, own this religion to be sober, manly, rational, divine.

"It is also pure from *bigotry*. Those who hold it are not bigoted to opinions. They would hold right opinions; but they are peculiarly cautious not to rest the weight of Christianity there. They have no such overgrown fondness for any opinions as to think those alone will make them Christians; or to confine their affection or esteem to those that agree with them therein. Nor are they bigoted to any particular branch even of practical religion. They are not attached to one more than another. They aim at uniform, universal obedience. They contend for nothing circumstantial, as if it were essential to religion; but for every thing in its own order.

"They dread that *bitter zeal*, that spirit of *persecution*, which has so often accompanied the spirit of reformation. They do not approve of using any kind of violence, on any pretence, in matters of religion. They allow no method of bringing any to the knowledge of the truth, except the methods of reason and persuasion; and their practice is consistent with their profession. They do not, in fact, hinder their dependants from worshipping God, in every respect, according to their own conscience.

"But if these things are so, may we not well say, 'What hath God wrought!' For such a work, if we consider the *extensiveness* of it, the *swiftness* with which it has spread, the *depth* of the religion so swiftly diffused, and its purity from all corrupt mixtures, we must acknowledge, cannot easily be paralleled, in all these concurrent circumstances, by any thing that is found in the English annals since Christianity was first planted in this island."*

As Mr. Wesley declined into the vale of years, the perpetuity of that system of doctrine and discipline, which had been so signally owned of God in the conversion and salvation of men, became a matter of anxious concern both to himself and his people. The appointment of the preachers to the various chapels, and to the consequent pastoral charge of the societies, presented the greatest difficulty. It had been agreed that, after the death of the two brothers, the power to station the preachers should be vested in the conference; and hence arose the inquiry, "Who constitute the conference?" the men who had hitherto borne that name being simply such preachers as Mr. Wesley had personally invited to meet him once a year to aid him with their advice, as to the most effectual means of carrying on the work of God. The preachers felt the importance of the case, and requested Mr. Wesley to consider what could be done in this emergency; so that, in the event of his death, the connection might not be dissolved. He took legal advice, and drew up the "Deed of Declaration," constituting one hundred preachers by name, "the Conference of the people called Methodists;" at the same time defining their powers, and making provision for the filling up of all vacancies occasioned by death, superannuation, or expulsion. This deed he caused to be enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of

* Works, vol. i, pp. 493–496, Am. edit.

Chancery, in the year 1784. It created some uneasiness at the time, particularly among the preachers whose names were omitted; but that uneasiness soon passed away; and the deed has unquestionably been the greatest benefit of the kind ever conferred upon the connection. From the time of Mr. Wesley's death, it has been strictly acted upon by the conference, and has preserved the unity of the body, by securing to the congregations and societies that itinerant ministry, for the exercise of which every Methodist chapel was originally built.

With respect to this document, Mr. Wesley says, "Without some authentic deed, fixing the meaning of the term, the moment I died the conference had been nothing. Therefore any of the proprietors of the land on which our preaching-houses were built, might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them: for the conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name.

"You see, then, in all the pains I have taken about this necessary deed, I have been labouring, not for myself, (I have no interest therein,) but for the whole body of Methodists; in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure. That is, if they continue to walk by faith, and show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth."*

The maintenance of the conference in the full possession and exercise of the powers with which he invested it, Mr. Wesley believed to be the only means of effectually preserving the unity and purity of the body; and of this every one must be convinced who duly considers the subject. The conference was not intrusted with those powers for its own sake, as has sometimes been insinu-

* Works, vol. vii, pp. 309, 310, Am. edit.

ated, but for the benefit of the connection in all its departments. It is the centre of union to the body.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATH OF THE TWO WESLEYS, AND OF THEIR PRINCIPAL CLERICAL FRIENDS.

Mr. Wesley was spared to a very advanced period of life; so that he superintended the itinerant ministry, and the societies which he had formed, till both had acquired an encouraging degree of stability. He survived all the clerical friends with whom he had been early connected in the work of God. Among these was the Rev. James Hervey, rector of Weston-Favell, in Northamptonshire. He was a member of the Methodist society in Oxford, being a commoner of Lincoln College when Mr. Wesley was a fellow. During his residence at the University, he was under great obligations to Mr. Wesley, who taught him Hebrew, and showed him other marks of especial kindness; which led him, on Mr. Wesley's departure to Georgia, to say, "My father, shall I call you, or my friend? for indeed you have been both to me."* He was a man of unquestionable piety, and very exemplary in the discharge of clerical duties in his parish. His writings, though disfigured by an artificial and inflated style, have been very useful, particularly in leading devout people to connect the love of nature, and admiration of the works of God, with evangelical sentiment. Having embraced the scheme of absolute predestination, he was induced, toward the close of life, to write against Mr. Wesley; but, on his death-bed, he directed the unfinished manuscript to

* Arminian Magazine, vol. i, p. 131.

be destroyed. It was, however, by Mr. Hervey's brother, placed in the hands of William Cudworth, a man of Antinomian principles, who had separated from Mr. Whitefield. By him it was understood to be largely interpolated; so that, when it was published, it was found to contain bitter and cruel sarcasms and reflections upon Mr. Wesley, which, there is reason to believe, never emanated from the alleged author, who was now no more. Mr. Wesley deeply felt this act of injustice. In Mr. Hervey's name, he was charged with such a want of common honesty that even Turks, Deists, and atheists would disown him. He defended himself in the spirit of Christian meekness, and with his accustomed acumen and force of argument. The following is his emphatic conclusion: "And is this thy voice, my son David? is this thy tender, loving, grateful spirit? No. The hand of Joab is in all this! I acknowledge the hand, the heart of William Cudworth. I perceive it was not an empty boast, (as I was, at first, inclined to think,) which he uttered to Mr. Pearse, at Bury, before my friend went to paradise, 'Mr. Hervey has given me full power to put out and *put in* what I please.'

"But he, too, has gone hence; and he knows now whether I am an honest man or no. It cannot be long, even in the course of nature, before I shall follow him.

> 'My race of glory's run, and race of shame;
> And I shall shortly be with them at rest.'

I could wish, till then, to be at peace with all men; but the will of the Lord be done! Peace or war, ease or pain, life or death is good, so I may but 'finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.'" Mr. Hervey died on Christmas-day, 1758.

One of the most remarkable of Mr. Wesley's clerical friends and fellow-labourers was Mr. Grimshaw, of

Haworth, in the west of Yorkshire; a man of apostolic simplicity and zeal. For three years he had continued under a distressing conviction of his guilt and danger, when, one day, in the year 1742, being in the utmost agony of mind, there was clearly represented to his believing view the Lord Jesus Christ pleading with God the Father in his behalf, and obtaining for him a free pardon. "I was now," says he, "willing to renounce myself, and to embrace Christ for my all in all. O what light and comfort did I enjoy in my own soul! and what a taste of the pardoning love of God!"

After this "his lively manner of representing the truths of God could not fail of being much talked of, and bringing many hundreds out of curiosity to Haworth church; who received so much benefit by what they heard, that, when the novelty was long over, the church continued to be full of people, many of whom came from far, and this for twenty years together.

"For fifteen years, or upward, he used to preach every week, fifteen, twenty, and sometimes thirty times, besides visiting the sick, and other occasional duties. In sixteen years he was only once suspended from his labour by sickness; though he dared all weathers upon the bleak mountains, and used his body with less compassion than a merciful man would use his beast. His soul, at various times, enjoyed large manifestations of God's love; and he drank deep into his spirit. His salutary influence was felt through an extensive tract of country; and his memory is still affectionately cherished by thousands of people, the descendants of those who were saved through his instrumentality. He died, in peace and holy triumph, on the 7th of April, 1762, in the 55th year of his age, and the twenty-first of his eminent usefulness. For some years he superintended the circuit in which his parish was included, and most faithfully and affectionately co-operated

with the Methodist preachers, who were stationed in that part of Yorkshire."*

The next of Mr. Wesley's clerical friends, who was called away, was the Rev. George Whitefield, who died in America, September 30, 1770, in the midst of his extraordinary labours and usefulness. He belonged to the original society of Methodists in Oxford, and cherished, from early life, a permanent affection for the Wesleys, as they also did for him. They submitted together to the austere discipline which Mr. Law recommended, knowing at that time no other gospel; but afterward, having obtained more just and adequate views of Christianity, they all began at the same time to preach the doctrine of present salvation from sin by faith in the Lord Jesus. It was in compliance with Mr. Whitefield's solicitation, and, by the force of his example, that they became field-preachers in England. For a season these men of God were as "a threefold cord, which is not easily broken," labouring together with a perfect oneness of heart and mind, till Mr. Whitefield began to preach the tenet of absolute predestination, when a separation became unavoidable. The Wesleys would have continued in union with him, but Mr. Whitefield's friends would hear of no accommodation with men who "were in so dangerous errors."† Having in vain attempted to convince each other, they mutually "agreed to differ." From this time Mr. Whitefield pursued an independent course, while the brothers remained one in judgment and effort. Yet, on both sides, a spirit of sincere respect was cherished. They loved each other for the sake of their common Lord; and esteemed each other highly for their work's sake.

As an author Mr. Whitefield never excelled. His writings want depth, originality, and compression. He is

* Works, vol. iv, pp. 118, 119, Am. edit.

† Works, vol. v, p. 247, Am. edit.

diffuse and feeble. But, as a preacher, he was, perhaps, never surpassed in the qualities which are adapted to produce effect upon mixed multitudes. His voice, his action, his pleading importunity were absolutely irresistible; and the deep emotions of the tens of thousands of people who hung upon his lips, as he travelled through Great Britain and America, attested the power of his eloquence. People of every character and grade were affected by the mighty unction which attended his ministry. Like the two Wesleys he dwelt particularly upon the first principles of revealed truth; insisting continually upon repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, as indispensably and universally necessary in order to justification, holiness, and admission into heaven. The one design of his ministry was to turn men from the world and sin to Christ. Mr. Wesley preached the funeral sermon of his friend, and bore willing testimony to his holy zeal, perseverance, indefatigable labours, and public usefulness. The difference of their creeds could not so far influence the minds of these great and good men as to induce a denial of each other's piety and uprightness.

Mr. Whitefield's letter to Mr. Wesley, dated December 3, 1753, and written when Mr. Wesley was supposed to be near death, is such an effusion of Christian affection as must for ever endear his memory to good men.

"*Bristol, December* 3, 1753.

"Rev. and Very Dear Sir,—If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the Church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you; and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands, with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head, amid the admiring throng of saints and angels: but I, poor I, that have been

waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind, to grovel here below! Well, this is my comfort: it cannot be long ere the chariots will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain you, even you, reverend and dear sir, shall not leave us yet: but if the decree is gone forth, that you must fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love! If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, reverend and dear sir, f-a-r-e-w-e-l-l: *I præ, sequar, etsi non passibus æquis.* My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you, I fear, too weak, for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to his never-failing mercy, and am, reverend and very dear sir,

"Your most affectionate, sympathizing, and
afflicted younger brother in the gospel
of our common Lord,
"G. WHITEFIELD."

The following is Mr. Wesley's sketch of the character of this very eminent man:—"Should we not mention his deep *gratitude* to all whom God had used as instruments of good to him?—of whom he did not cease to speak in the most respectful manner even to his dying day? Should we not mention that he had a heart susceptible of the most generous and the most tender *friendship?* I have frequently thought that this, of all others, was the distinguishing part of his character. How few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing affections! Was it not principally by this that the hearts of others were so strangely drawn and knit to him? Can any thing but love beget love? This shone in his very countenance, and continually breathed in all his words, whether in public or private. Was it not this which, quick and penetrating as lightning, flew

from heart to heart? which gave that life to his sermons, his conversations, his letters?

"How suitable to the friendliness of his spirit was the *frankness* and *openness* of his conversation! although it was as far removed from rudeness on the one hand, as from guile on the other. Was not this frankness at once a fruit and a proof of his *courage* and *intrepidity?* Armed with these, he feared not the faces of men, but used great 'plainness of speech' to persons of every rank and condition, high and low, rich and poor; endeavouring, by 'manifestation of the truth,' to commend himself to 'every man in the sight of God.'

"Neither was he afraid of labour or pain, any more than of 'what man could do unto him;' being equally

'*Patient* in bearing ill, and doing well.'

And this appeared in the *steadiness* wherewith he pursued whatever he undertook for his Master's sake. Witness one instance for all,—the Orphan-house in Georgia; which he began, and perfected, in spite of all discouragements. Indeed, in whatever concerned himself he was pliant and flexible. In this case he was 'easy to be entreated;' easy to be either convinced or persuaded. But he was immoveable in the things of God, or wherever his conscience was concerned. None could persuade, any more than affright, him to vary, in the least point, from that *integrity* which was inseparable from his whole character, and regulated all his words and actions. Herein he did

'Stand as an iron pillar strong,
And steadfast as a wall of brass.'

"If it be inquired what was the foundation of this integrity, or of his sincerity, courage, patience, and every other valuable and amiable quality, it is easy to give the answer:—It was not the excellence of his natural temper,

nor the strength of his understanding; it was not the force of education; no, nor the advice of his friends. It was no other than *faith* in a bleeding Lord; faith, the operation of God. It was a 'lively *hope* of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' It was the '*love* of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him,' filling his soul with tender, disinterested love to every child of man. From this source arose that torrent of eloquence, which frequently bore down all before it; from this, that astonishing force of persuasion which the most hardened sinners could not resist. This it was which often made his 'head as waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears.' This it was which enabled him to pour out his soul in prayer, in a manner peculiar to himself, with such fulness and ease united together, with such strength and variety both of sentiment and expression.

"What an honour it pleased God to put upon his faithful servant, by allowing him to declare his everlasting gospel in so many various countries, to such numbers of people, and with so great an effect on so many of their precious souls! Have we read or heard of any person, since the apostles, who testified the gospel of the grace of God through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads, of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of any who have been a blessed instrument in his hand of bringing so many sinners 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?'"*

In the year 1785 Mr. Wesley lost two of the most dear and valued of all his earthly friends: the Rev. Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, in Kent; and the Rev. John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley. Soon after he had begun to

* Works, vol. i, pp. 476, 477, Am. edit.

preach the doctrine of salvation by faith, his acquaintance with Mr. Perronet commenced; and their friendship was most intimate and confidential. It is observable, from Mr. Wesley's journal, that, whenever he was in perplexity and trouble, he almost invariably visited Shoreham to consult the venerable vicar of that village; so that Mr. Charles Wesley used to call this holy man "the archbishop of the Methodists." Two of his sons became travelling preachers in Mr. Wesley's connection.

"On Saturday, May 7th," says Mr. Wesley, "that venerable saint, Mr. Perronet, desired his grand-daughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, to go out into the garden and take a little air. He was reading, and hearing her read, the three last chapters of Isaiah. When she returned he was in a kind of ecstasy; the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep sense of the glorious things which were shortly to come to pass. He continued unspeakably happy that day, and, on Sunday, was, if possible, happier still. And, indeed, heaven seemed to be, as it were, opened to all that were round about him. When he was in bed she went into his room to see if any thing was wanting; and, as she stood at the feet of the bed, he smiled, and broke out, 'God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belong to thee! Yea, he *will* bless thee!' which he earnestly repeated many times, till she left the room. When she went in the next morning, Monday the 9th, his spirit was returned to God!

"So ended the holy and happy life of Mr. Vincent Perronet, in the ninety-second year of his age. I follow hard after him in years, being now in the eighty-second year of my age. O that I may follow him in holiness; and that my last end may be like his!"*

Mr. Fletcher was one of the holiest men that ever lived, He was a native of Switzerland; but, having come to

* Works, vol. iv, p. 614, Am. edit.

England, he was made a partaker of the Christian salvation through the instrumentality of the Methodists, and, to the last, continued in intimate connection with them. He maintained an inviolable attachment to Mr. Wesley, whose theological views he defended with consummate ability, meekness, and charity, in a long and arduous controversy, in which his success was unquestionable. Next to Mr. Wesley he was the ablest advocate of the Methodist tenets; and no man ever adorned them by a purer life, or a more burning, active love. His end fully corresponded with his deep and fervent piety. When laid on the bed of death he told Mrs. Fletcher that he had received such a manifestation of the full meaning of those words, "God is love," as he never could be able to tell. "It fills me," said he, "every moment. O Polly, my dear Polly, God is love! Shout, shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" The servant coming in, he cried out, "O Sally, God is love! Shout, both of you. I want to hear you shout his praise!"

He had always delighted much in these lines,—

> "Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,
> Mercy, free boundless mercy! cries;"

and, whenever Mrs. Fletcher repeated them, he would answer, "Boundless, boundless, boundless!" and, when articulation had become extremely difficult, he exclaimed,

> "Mercy's full power I *soon* shall prove,
> Loved with an everlasting love!"

"I was intimately acquainted with him," says Mr. Wesley, "for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and, in all that time, I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years, but

one equal to him I have not known,—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblameable a character in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find another such on this side of eternity."*

The following inscription, written by the late Rev. Richard Watson, in memory of this great and holy man, is placed upon a marble tablet in the Wesleyan chapel, City-road, London:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. JOHN WILLIAM DE LA FLECHERE,

VICAR OF MADELEY, IN SHROPSHIRE:

BORN AT NYON, IN SWITZERLAND, THE XII OF

SEPTEMBER, A. D. MDCCXXIX,

DIED THE XIV OF AUGUST, MDCCLXXXV.

A man eminent for genius, eloquence, and theological learning;
Still more distinguished for sanctity of manners, and the virtues of primitive Christianity.
Adorned with "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,"
And bringing forth "the fruits of the Spirit" in singular richness and maturity,
The measure of every other grace in him was exceeded by his deep and unaffected humility.
Of enlarged views as to the merits of the atonement,
And of those gracious rights with which it invests all who believe,
He had "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS,"
And, in reverent and transporting contemplations, the habit of his devout and hallowed spirit,
There dwelt as beneath the wings of the cherubim,
Beholding "the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST,"
and was "changed into the same image;"

* Works, vol. i, p. 533, Am. edit.

Teaching, by his own attainments, more than even by his writings, the fulness of evangelical promises,
And with what intimacy of communion man may walk with God.

He was the Friend and Coadjutor of the Rev. John Wesley,
Whose Apostolic views of the doctrines of General Redemption, Justification by Faith,
And Christian perfection, he successfully defended,
Leaving to future ages an able exposition of "the truth which is according to Godliness,"
And erecting an impregnable rampart against Pharisaic and Antinomian error,
In a series of works, distinguished by the beauty of their style, by force of argument,
And by a gentle and catholic spirit; affording an edifying example of "speaking the truth in love,"
In a long and ardent controversy.
For twenty-five years the parish of Madeley was the scene of his unexampled pastoral labours,
And he was there interred amidst the tears and lamentations of thousands,
The testimony of their hearts to his exalted piety, and to his unwearied exertions for their salvation;
But his memory triumphed over death,
And his saintly example exerts increasing influence in the Churches of Christ,
Through the study of his Writings and the publication of his Biography.

In token of their veneration for his Character,
And in gratitude for the services rendered by him to the cause of Truth,
This Monument was erected by the Trustees of this Chapel,
A. D. MDCCCXXII.

Mr. Fletcher wrote with great ability and effect in defence of the administration during the American war; and when Lord North inquired of him what could be done for him as an acknowledgment of his services, Mr. Fletcher signified, that the only thing he wanted was that which

his lordship could not give,—"more grace." It would be a matter of curiosity to know how many such answers have been returned in cases of the same kind.

Three years after the death of Mr. Fletcher, Mr. John Wesley sustained the loss of his brother Charles, to whom he had been united through life by a strong and tender affection. They began their religious career together at Oxford; they endured the same hardships and reproach in Georgia; they obtained the Christian salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus, within three days of each other, in the year 1738; they had both travelled through England and Ireland, calling sinners to repentance in the open air, and meekly enduring every form of calumny and danger; and they had imbodied the same evangelical doctrines in various imperishable publications,—John in sterling prose, and Charles in equally sterling verse.

On one point their views were different. Charles, it would seem, adhered to the opinion of the divine appointment of diocesan episcopacy. John was early convinced that, according to the New Testament, bishops and presbyters are of the same order, and have therefore the same right to ordain men to the holy ministry. A bishop, in John's view, was only the first among equals; Charles regarded a bishop as belonging to a higher and distinct order, which Christ intended to remain in his Church till the end of time. No appointment of men by presbyters to the sacred office would he acknowledge as valid; and hence he disapproved of his brother's ordinations. John believed that he was as truly a Scriptural bishop as any man in Europe; and, as the necessities of the spiritual children whom God had given him urgently called for such a proceeding, he appointed men not only to preach the word of God, but to administer the Christian sacraments. The manner in which the brothers concluded their friendly dispute on the subject is worthy of perma-

nent record:—"I walk still," says John to Charles, "by the same rule I have done for between forty and fifty years. I do nothing rashly. It is not likely I should. The hey-day of my blood is over. If you will go hand in hand with me, do. But do not hinder me, if you will not help. Perhaps if you had kept close to me I might have done better. However, with or without help, I creep on. And as I have been hitherto, so I trust I shall always be,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

To this Charles responded:—"I thank you for your intention to remain my friend. Herein my heart is as your heart. Whom God hath joined let not man put asunder. We have taken each other for better for worse, till death us do—part! no: but eternally unite. Therefore, in the love that never faileth,

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"C. WESLEY."

Dr. Whitehead says, that "Mr. Charles Wesley had a weak body and a poor state of health, during the greatest part of his life. I believe he laid the foundation of both at Oxford, by too close application to study and abstinence from food. He rode much on horseback, which probably contributed to lengthen out life to a good old age. I visited him several times in his last sickness; and his body was indeed reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had always been most pleased to see in others,—unaffected humility, and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy, but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace."

From the time of his conversion he had been accustomed to think in verse; and the habit remained with him till his spirit returned to God. A few days before his

death, having been silent for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and requested her to write at his dictation; when he feebly articulated the following lines:—

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!"

He died on the 29th of March, 1788, aged seventy-nine years, and, at his own desire, was buried in Marybone church-yard. The pall was supported by eight clergymen. On his tombstone are the following lines, written by himself on the death of one of his friends:—

"With poverty of spirit bless'd,
Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest;
A sinner saved, through grace forgiven,
Redeem'd from earth, to reign in heaven!
Thy labours of unwearied love,
By thee forgot, are crown'd above;
Crown'd through the mercy of thy Lord,
With a free, full, immense reward!"

The following epitaph is inscribed upon a marble tablet in the City-road chapel. The sentence which is placed at the head of it he is said to have frequently uttered:—

"God buries his workmen, but carries on his work."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY, M. A.

EDUCATED AT WESTMINSTER SCHOOL,

AND SOME TIME STUDENT AT CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

As a Preacher,
He was eminent for ability, zeal, and usefulness,
being learned without pride,
and pious without ostentation;
to the sincere, diffident Christian,
A Son of Consolation;

but to the vain boaster, the hypocrite, and the profane,
A Son of Thunder.

He was the first who received the name of
Methodist;
and, uniting with his brother, the Rev. John Wesley,
in the plan of Itinerant Preaching,
endured hardship, persecution, and disgrace,
as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST;
contributing largely, by the usefulness of his labours,
to the first formation of the Methodist Societies
in these Kingdoms.

As a Christian Poet, he stood unrivalled;
and his Hymns will convey instruction and consolation
to the faithful in CHRIST JESUS,
As long as the English language shall be understood.
He was born the XVIII of December, MDCCVIII,
and died the XXIX of March, MDCCLXXXVIII,
a firm and pious Believer in the Doctrines of the Gospel,
and a sincere Friend to the Church of England.

Dr. Whitehead, who wrote the Life of Mr. Charles Wesley, inflicted a deep injury upon his character and memory. Writing for party objects, he represented him as a model of Methodistical perfection, and John as often weak and erring. This attempt to exalt Charles at the expense of his brother not only failed, but so offended many persons as to induce them to withhold from him the admiration which is justly his due. He could not have written the sermons, appeals, and controversial tracts which bear the name of John, nor could he have organized the societies, and then preserved them and the preachers in Christian order for half a century; but, for many years, his ministry was signally powerful and efficient; and his hymns are a richer bequest to the Christian church in Great Britain and America than language can express. In this respect never was man more honoured of God. How often the Holy Spirit will make these sacred compositions a means of quickening the devotions of individual believers, and of

worshipping assemblies, will be known only in the day of the Lord.

By some persons Mr. Charles Wesley has been considered as a high and intolerant Churchman; but this view of his character is far from correct. That his attachment to the Church of England was sincere and ardent, will not be denied; nor that he was exceedingly anxious to prevent the Methodists from becoming a distinct body; but, as a clergyman, he was irregular through life. After his return from Georgia he was never under direct episcopal control; and he seldom preached and administered the sacraments but in places which no bishop had either consecrated or licensed. On the subject of church abuses and clerical delinquencies he expressed himself in language of much greater severity than John ever used.

As a man he possessed a truly noble and generous spirit. In his friendships he was cordial, firm, and affectionate; and was greatly beloved and admired by those who were intimate with him. The following hymn which he appended to the first edition of his brother's sermon on the "Catholic Spirit," shows him to have been "a lover of good men" in general, without distinction of sect:—

"CATHOLIC LOVE.

Weary of all this wordy strife,
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,
To thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Whose love my simple heart inflames,
Divinely taught, at last I fly,
With thee and thine to live and die.

Forth from the midst of Babel brought,
Parties and sects I cast behind,
Enlarged my heart, and free my thought,
Where'er the latent truth I find,
The latent truth with joy to own,
And bow to Jesus' name alone.

Redeem'd by thine almighty grace,
I taste my glorious liberty,
With open arms the world embrace,
And *cleave* to those who cleave to thee;
But only in thy saints *delight*,
Who walk with God in purest white.

One with the little flock I rest,
The members sound who hold the Head;
The chosen few with pardon blest,
And by th' anointing Spirit led
Into the mind that was in thee,
Into the depths of Deity.

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen, these,
Who do my heavenly Father's will;
Who aim at perfect holiness,
And all thy counsels to fulfil;
Athirst to be whate'er thou art,
And love their God with all their heart.

From these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,
Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,
Unfeign'd, unbounded love I find,
And constant as the life of God;
Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,
As pure, as even, and as strong.

Join'd to the hidden church unknown,
In this sure bond of perfectness,
Obscurely safe I dwell alone,
And glory in th' uniting grace,
To me, to each believer given,
To all thy saints in earth and heaven.

C. W."

In the obituary of the preachers, and in answer to the question, "Who have died this year?" his brother says, "Mr. Charles Wesley, who, after spending fourscore years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired to Abraham's bosom. He had no disease; but, after a gradual decay of some months,

'The weary wheels of life stood still at last.'

"His least praise was his talent for poetry; although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that, 'that single poem, Wrestling Jacob, was worth all the verses he himself had written.'"*

The time now drew near when Mr. John Wesley himself must also die. To the last he pursued his plans of usefulness with the same diligence and constancy which had marked his course from the beginning; and his holy gratitude and cheerfulness remained unabated. A few years before his death he published a sermon on God's vineyard, in which he shows that many persons who ought to have profited by the Methodist doctrine and discipline had been criminally inattentive to their duty and spiritual interest; and hence some writers have assumed that he acknowledged his labours to have been a failure. Never was conclusion more illogical, or more at variance with fact. Because several people, who had been placed within the influence of his ministry and that of his pious coadjutors, remained in impenitence and unbelief, and some others ran into extravagance and folly, did Mr. Wesley make no account of the tens of thousands of holy and happy Christians, his spiritual children, scattered through the three kingdoms, as well as over the American continent? Impossible! As well might it be said that Christianity was a failure; and that St. Paul made no account of his labours, either in Corinth or in any other place, because many of the people remained in pagan ignorance and guilt, and some of those who assumed the Christian profession dishonoured it by their irregularities of conduct. In March, 1785, he thus speaks of the revival of religion in which he had acted so very prominent a part:—

"I was now considering how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, has grown up.

* Minutes of Conference, vol. i, p. 201.

It has spread through all Great Britain and Ireland, the Isle of Wight, and the Isle of Man; then to America, from the Leeward Islands, through the whole continent, into Canada and Newfoundland. And the societies in all these parts walk by one rule, knowing that religion is holy tempers; and, striving to worship God, not in form only, but in spirit and in truth."*

The following verses, which he inserted in the Hymn-book for general use about eleven years before his death, very correctly express the predominant feeling of his heart at this period of his life:—

"O the goodness of God, Employing a clod
His tribute of glory to raise!
His standard to bear, And with triumph declare
His unspeakable riches of grace!

O the fathomless love, That has deign'd to approve
And prosper the work of my hands!
With my pastoral crook I went over the brook,
And behold I am spread into bands.

Who, I ask in amaze, Hath begotten me these?
And inquire from what quarter they came?
My full heart it replies, They are born from the skies,
And gives glory to God and the Lamb.

All honour and praise To the Father of grace,
To the Spirit and Son I return,
The business pursue, He hath given me to do,
And rejoice that I ever was born.

In a rapture of joy My life I employ,
The God of my life to proclaim;
'Tis worth living for this, To administer bliss,
And salvation in Jesus's name.

My remnant of days I spend in his praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem;
Be they many or few, My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to him."

* Works, vol. iv, p. 609, Am. edit.

At this period the highest respect was paid to him by almost all classes of people. The churches in London were generally closed against him in the year 1738; and now he had more applications to preach in those very churches, for the benefit of public charities, than he could possibly comply with. His visits to many places in the country created a sort of general festival. The people crowded around him as he passed along the streets; the windows were filled with eager gazers; and the children waited "to catch the good man's smile," which the overflowing benignity of his heart rendered him ever willing to bestow. When he first went into Cornwall, accompanied by John Nelson, he plucked blackberries from the hedges to allay the cravings of hunger; and slept upon boards, having his saddle-bags for a pillow, till the bones cut through his skin. Now he was received, in that county especially, as an angel of God. On the 17th of August, 1789, on visiting Falmouth, he says, "The last time I was here, above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions. But how is the tide turned! High and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love, gaping and staring as if the king were going by."*

January 1st, 1790, he says, "I am an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labour. I can preach and write still."†

Thus he was found when the great Master called. He continued in his work till the latter end of February, 1791, when his strength entirely failed; and, after languishing

† Works, vol. iv, p. 278, Am. edit. ‡ Ibid. vol. iv, p. 735.

a few days, during the whole of which he presented a most edifying example of holy cheerfulness and resignation, he died on the 2d of March, in great peace. When the hand of death was upon him, he oftener than once repeated, and that with solemn emphasis, the lines,

> "I the chief of sinners am,
> But Jesus died for me."

And, as the result of that faith in the Lord Jesus, of which these words were the significant expression, he again and again exclaimed, *The best of all is, God is with us!*

A few more of his dying sayings must be acceptable to the serious reader. Three days before he died, referring to an illness which he had in Bristol, in the year 1783, he says, "My words then were,

> 'I the chief of sinners am,
> But Jesus died for me.'"

One said, "Is this the present language of your heart? and do you feel as you then did?" He replied, "Yes." When the same person repeated,—

> "Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
> And claim the crown through Christ my own;"

and then added, "it is enough: He, our precious Immanuel, has purchased, has promised all;" he earnestly replied, "He is all! He is all!"

In the evening of the same day, while sitting in his chair, he said, "How necessary it is for every one to be on the right foundation!

> 'I the chief of sinners am,
> But Jesus died for me!'

We must be justified by faith; and then go on to perfection."

On the next day he said, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus;" and, referring to the

text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich," he emphatically said, "That is the foundation, the only foundation, and there is no other." He also repeated, three or four times, in the space of a few hours, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

On the day before his death, after a very restless night, he began to sing,—

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord!
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to thy creatures return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

O wouldst thou again be made known,
Again in thy Spirit descend,
And set up in each of thine own
A kingdom that never shall end!
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway."

Here his strength failed; but, after lying still awhile, he called for pen and ink. They were brought to him; but his hand, which had been a means of conveying comfort and instruction to thousands, could no longer perform its office. "Tell me," said one, "what you would say." "Nothing," answered he, "but *that God is with us*." In a little while he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in these words,—

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And, when my voice is lost in death,

Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God; he made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train;
His truth for ever stands secure;
He saves th' oppress'd, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain."

During the same day, when he appeared to change for death, he said, with a weak voice, "Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest the tongue." He then sung,—

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree;"

when his voice again failed.

Several friends being in the house, they were called into his room, and all kneeled down to prayer; when his fervour of spirit was manifest to all present. In particular parts of the prayer his whole soul was engaged in such a manner as evidently showed how ardently he longed for the accomplishment of their united desires. When Mr. Broadbent prayed that if God were about to take away their father to his eternal rest, he would continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which he had long made his aged servant a means of propagating and establishing in the world, an unusual degree of earnestness accompanied the loud *amen* of the dying patriarch and saint. When they rose from their knees he took hold of their hands, kindly saluted them, and said, "Farewell, farewell!"

Some time after he strove to speak; but finding that the

friends who were present could not understand him, he paused a little, and then with all his remaining strength, cried out, *The best of all is, God is with us.* Lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice in a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated, *The best of all is, God is with us.*

When his parched lips were wetted, he devoutly repeated his usual thanksgiving after meat: "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies. Bless the church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for ever and ever."

In the course of the same day, at different times, he said, "He causeth his servants to lie down in peace." "The clouds drop fatness." "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

"I'll praise, I'll praise."

The next morning the closing scene drew near. Joseph Bradford, his faithful and well-tried friend, prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to utter was, "Farewell." While several of his friends were kneeling around his bed, without a groan, this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord.

His will contains the following characteristic item: "I give six pounds to be divided among the six poor men who shall carry my body to the grave; for I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors, in the name of God, punctually to observe this."

Few men have been more honoured in their death than this venerable servant of the Lord. On the day preceding his interment, his remains were, according to his own direction, placed in the chapel near his dwelling-house in London; and the crowds that went to see them were so

great, that business was generally suspended in the City-road, and it was with great difficulty that any carriage could pass. His funeral took place early in the morning, lest any accident should occur, in consequence of the vast concourse of people which was otherwise expected to attend. When the officiating clergyman, at the grave-side, pronounced the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear *father* here departed," the people, who nearly filled the burying-ground, burst into loud weeping; and it is believed that scarcely a dry eye was to be seen in the entire assembly. When the funeral sermon was preached, the men occupied the floor of the City-road chapel, and the women the gallery; and, with one solitary exception, it is said, that not a coloured riband was to be seen in the vast congregation. One lady, with a blue riband on her beaver hat, found her way into the gallery; and, on observing her singularity, she instantly tore it from her head, and thus assumed the garb of mourning with the rest of the people.

The following is the inscription upon Mr. Wesley's tomb:—

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE VENERABLE JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,

LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE,

OXFORD.

This great Light arose,
by the singular providence of God,
to enlighten these Nations,
and to revive, enforce, and defend
the pure apostolical doctrines and practices of the
Primitive Church:
which he continued to do, both by his writings and his labours,
for more than half a Century:
and, to his inexpressible joy,

not only beheld their influence extending,
and their efficacy witnessed,
in the hearts and lives of many thousands,
as well in the Western World as in these Kingdoms;
but also, far above all human power or expectation,
lived to see provision made,
by the singular grace of God,
for their continuance and establishment,
to the joy of future generations!

Reader, if thou art constrained to bless the instrument,
give God the glory!

After having languished a few days, he at length finished his course
and his life together;
gloriously triumphing over death,
March 2d, An. Dom. 1791,
in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

The following epitaph is inscribed upon a marble tablet in the City-road chapel:—

"The best of all is, God is with us."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.,

SOME TIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

A man in learning and sincere piety,
scarcely inferior to any:
In zeal, ministerial labours, and extensive usefulness,
superior, perhaps, to all men, since the days of St. Paul.
Regardless of fatigue, personal danger, and disgrace,
he went out into the highways and hedges,
calling sinners to repentance,
and publishing the Gospel of Peace.

He was the Founder of the Methodist Societies,
and the chief Promoter and Patron
of the plan of Itinerant Preaching,
which he extended through Great Britain and Ireland,

the West Indies, and America, with unexampled success
He was born the XVII of June, MDCCIII,
and died the II of March, MDCCXCI,
in sure and certain hope of eternal life,
through the Atonement and Mediation of
a Crucified Saviour.

He was sixty-five years in the Ministry,
and fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher;
He lived to see, in these kingdoms only,
about three hundred Itinerant,
and one thousand Local Preachers,
raised up from the midst of his own people,
and eighty thousand persons in the societies under his care.
His name will be ever had in grateful remembrance
by all who rejoice in the universal spread
of the Gospel of Christ.
SOLI DEO GLORIA.

Fully to exhibit the character of this man of God would require an ample volume. His attainments as a scholar, had he possessed no other distinction, would alone have entitled him to high respect. He was a critic in the Greek language; and he both spoke and wrote Latin with remarkable fluency and correctness to the end of his life. At the University he studied Hebrew and Arabic. In Georgia he conducted public worship both in French and Italian; and he offered to render the same service in their own tongue, to a regiment of Germans at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, during the rebellion of 1745. His skill in logic was proverbial, and must strike every one who reads either his practical or his controversial works. They present finer examples, illustrative of the principles of this most useful art, than those of almost any other of our English authors. His correct and elegant literary taste, his readiness of apprehension, his ability to comprehend and simplify the most abstruse and complex subjects, are manifest in the whole of his voluminous writings. There are many passages in his works which, for depth and justness

of conception, and strength and beauty of expression, would not suffer from a comparison with the most admired selections that the English language can furnish.

He was truly a lover of mankind. Some of the nobility and gentry honoured him with their friendship; and he availed himself of the opportunity thus afforded for reminding them of the temptations and dangers of wealth, and the responsibility which it involves, as well as of the substantial good which is to be found in the possession of deep personal godliness. An affectionate and admonitory letter, addressed to Sir James Lowther, and dated October 28, 1754, is an admirable example of this. Among other things, he says to the wealthy and honourable baronet, "You are on the borders of the grave, as well as I. Shortly we must both appear before God. When it seemed to me, some months since, that my life was near an end, I was troubled that I had not dealt plainly with you. This you will allow me to do now, without any reserve, in the fear and in the presence of God. I reverence you for your office as a magistrate. I believe you to be an honest, upright man; I love you for having protected an innocent people from their cruel and lawless oppressors: but so much the more am I obliged to say, (though I judge not, God is the judge,) I fear you are covetous; that you love the world: and if you do, as sure as the word of God is true, you are not in a state of salvation.

"I must once more earnestly entreat you to consider yourself, and God, and eternity. As to yourself, you are not the proprietor of any thing, no, not of one shilling in the world. You are only a steward of what another intrusts you with, to be laid out, not according to your will, but his. And what would you think of your steward, if he laid out what is called your money according to his own will and pleasure? Is not God the sole proprietor of

all things? And are not you to give an account to him for every part of his goods? And O, how dreadful an account, if you have expended any part of them, not according to his will, but your own? Is not death at hand? And are not you and I just stepping into eternity! Are we not just going to appear in the presence of God, and that naked of all worldly goods? Will you then rejoice in the money you have left behind you? Or in that you have given to support a family, as it is called? that is, in truth, to support the pride, and vanity, and luxury which you have yourself despised all your life long? O, sir, I beseech you, for the sake of God, for the sake of your own immortal soul, examine yourself, whether you do not love money! If so, you cannot love God. And if we die without the fear of God, what remains? Only to be banished from him for ever and ever!"*

The privations of the poor excited his tenderest sympathy, and he put forth every effort to relieve them. At the beginning of winter, it was his practice, in London, to raise a fund for the purpose of meeting the wants of the necessitous. This he did by going from door to door among the rich and liberal to whom he could gain access; and in the distribution of food and clothing among the pious who were in want he felt a greater satisfaction than "victors in a triumph know." Almost daily was he found by the beds of the afflicted; and his charity was only limited by his income. To God and the poor he gave all that he possessed. The following affecting record, written with a tremulous hand, only a few months before his decease, closes his book of private accounts:—

"N. B. For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being

* Works, vol. iii. pp. 572, 573, Am. edit.

satisfied with the continual conviction, that I save all I can, and give all I can; that is, all I have.

"*July* 16, 1790. JOHN WESLEY."

For nothing was he more remarkable than his love to children. Often did he lay his hands upon them, and bless them in the name of his great Master. He was in the habit of selecting small silver coins of peculiar freshness, and of presenting them to the children of his friends, as memorials of his affection.

In the improvement of time he was, perhaps, never exceeded. Through the greater part of his life he rose at four o'clock in the morning; and every moment of his waking hours was devoted to some useful object. Admirably did he exemplify his own rule, intended for the guidance of his preachers:—"Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed; never while away time." "If any one," says he, "desires to know exactly what quantity of sleep his own constitution requires, he may very easily make the experiment which I made about sixty years ago. I then waked every night, about twelve or one, and lay awake for some time. I readily concluded that this arose from my lying longer in bed than nature required. To be satisfied, I procured an alarum, which waked me the next morning at seven; (near an hour earlier than I rose the day before;) yet I lay awake again at night. The second morning I rose at six; but, notwithstanding this, I lay awake the second night. The third morning I rose at five; but, nevertheless, I lay awake the third night. The fourth morning I rose at four; (as, by the grace of God, I have done ever since;) and I lay awake no more."*

His knowledge was comprehensive, and his conversational powers of a high order. Dr. Samuel Johnson,

* Works, vol. ii, p. 295, Am. edit.

an unexceptionable judge, who knewhim intimately, said, "He talks well on every subject." Hence the following lines of Cowper :—

> "O, I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,
> Ere life go down, to see such sights again)
> A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
> Who never saw the sword he could not wield,
> Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
> Exact, but not precise, though meek, keen-eyed :
> A man that could have foil'd, at their own play,
> A dozen would-bes of the modern day :
> Who, when occasion justified its use,
> Had wit as bright as ready to produce ;
> Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
> Or from philosophy's enlighten'd page,
> His rich materials, and regale your ear
> With strains it was a privilege to hear.
> Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
> And his chief glory, was the gospel theme :
> There he was copious as old Greece or Rome ;
> His happy eloquence seem'd there at home ;
> Ambitious, not to shine, or to excel,
> But to treat justly what he loved so well."

The power which he possessed over the preachers and the societies was often a subject of remark during his life, and it has created surprise since his death. It was a power which he never sought, and which he never abused. He received it as involving great responsibility, and made it his constant business to use it for the advancement of the work of God. The government which he exercised was truly paternal ; and both the preachers and societies felt it to be a blessing. His was no crooked and sinuous policy, but a straightforward, upright, and Christian course, without selfishness, and without guile.

But it is with reference to that revival of religion, of which he was the chief instrument, that his character will ever be principally considered. He deviated from the

order of the church to which he belonged; but only so far as he believed himself providentially called, and in those things where he felt that, in his case, the opposite conduct would be a sin. He saw impiety and wickedness everywhere prevalent; and he lifted up his warning voice, calling the people to repentance, that so iniquity might not be their ruin. He learned from his own experience, as well as from the Bible, that peace of conscience and purity of heart are attainable only through faith in Jesus Christ; and he proclaimed a full and present salvation to all who would thus accept it as the free gift of God. The consequence was, that awakened multitudes asked his spiritual advice, and begged of him to take them under his pastoral care. Hence the formation of societies. Then among those very people, men who had never received a formal appointment to the Christian ministry began to preach to others the truth which they had themselves received. These he attempted to prevent; but finding that they possessed the requisite piety, knowledge, and talents for the work which they had undertaken, and that they were so far sanctioned by the divine blessing as that sinners were, by their means, reclaimed and converted, he was compelled to submit; being very much in the situation of St. Peter, when, in justification of his own proceedings with respect to Cornelius, he emphatically said, "What was I, that I could withstand God?"

Thus led into a course of usefulness which he had never contemplated, and to which, in the first instance, he had a strong aversion, he devoted his life to the one object of spreading true religion in the world. The things which he attempted to advance were not the mere forms and circumstantials of Christianity, much less matters of doubtful disputation; but solid virtue; the love of God, and of all mankind; happiness in God, and entire conformity to his will. For these great purposes he preached, and wrote,

and travelled, and sustained the charge of the numerous societies and preachers; adjusting their differences, solving their doubts, and directing their movements. From these all-absorbing enterprises of truth and charity nothing could draw him aside. Neither the caresses of friends, nor the occasional perverseness of individuals among his own people, nor the opposition of furious mobs, nor the incessant and bitter peltings of the press, could induce him to falter in his career, or suspend his labours for a single day. Weaknesses and infirmities he had, for he was a fallen man; but who among his detractors emulate his active zeal, and patient, laborious love? His spiritual children will ever bless God for raising up such an instrument of good, especially in an age of infidelity, lukewarmness, and irreligion; for crowning his efforts and plans with such unexampled success; and for supporting him under cares and discouragements which feeble human nature could never of itself have sustained.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROGRESS OF RELIGION AFTER MR. WESLEY'S DEATH.

To prevent any abuse of the "Deed of Declaration," and secure the perpetuity of his plans of usefulness when he should be no more, Mr. Wesley left the following letter to be read by the conference, at its first assembling after his death:—

"TO THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

"*Chester, April* 7, 1785.

"My Dear Brethren,—Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connection

with you, or from some other privilege which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience than to leave these, my last words, with you.

"I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the 'Deed of Declaration,' to assume any superiority over your brethren: but let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

"In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons. in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood school, in disposing of the yearly contribution, and the preachers' fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you to the end. JOHN WESLEY."

The preachers, having met at the time and place appointed, and this truly characteristic letter having been read, the following record was made:—

"The conference have unanimously resolved, that all the preachers who are in full connection with them shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the conference enjoy, agreeably to the above written letter of our venerable deceased father in the gospel.

"It may be expected that the conference make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley; but they find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event.

"Their souls do truly mourn their great loss; and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their most esteemed father and friend, by endeavouring, with great humility and dif-

fidence, to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life."*

The death of its founder formed a crisis in Wesleyan Methodism. While he lived, he was a bond of union, both to the preachers and to all the societies; but whether their unity could be preserved when his personal influence was no longer felt, was a question of very difficult solution, concerning which there were great searchings of heart in many quarters. If the "Deed of Declaration" could be acted upon, so that the governing power which that instrument created should be generally acknowledged, there could be no just ground of painful apprehension; but if these objects could not be gained, the breaking up of the connection was inevitable. The preachers felt the awful responsibility of their situation, and pledged themselves to abide by the principles which had regulated Mr. Wesley's conduct from the beginning. Some of them were men of more than ordinary experience, wisdom, and integrity. Among these William Thompson and Alexander Mather stood pre-eminent. They were men of strong sense, sound discretion, firm purpose, deep piety; and were solemnly impressed with the justness of Mr. Wesley's plans, which they also thoroughly understood. These men of God, supported by their brethren, were a means of preserving the Methodist system in unimpaired efficiency in those critical times, and have thus laid the successive generations of both preachers and people under lasting obligations.

The first attempt to set aside the "Deed of Declaration," and, by necessary consequence, to subvert the itinerant ministry which Mr. Wesley had instituted, was made by a body of trustees of chapels, who claimed the right of appointing the preachers to their respective pulpits.

* Minutes of Conference, vol. i, pp. 233, 234.

This scheme was resisted and came to naught. Had it succeeded, the Methodist societies would at once have been converted into independent churches; the regular exchange of preachers would necessarily have ceased; and the plans of Mr. Wesley would have been only matters of history.

The next attempt was made by certain persons of democratic principles, but of very limited views, who contended for the introduction into the conference, as members of that body, of men whom the "Deed of Declaration" never contemplated. This plan was also resisted, as being directly ruinous in its tendency. Had it been adopted, the conference, as constituted by Mr. Wesley, would have had no existence; and no other body could have legally performed its prescribed functions. Another body could have had no just authority either to appoint the preachers to the chapels, or to execute the discipline of the connection. The conference was nothing but as it was defined and invested with power by the "Deed of Declaration;" and, therefore, the moment that deed was superseded, there would have been an end of the Wesleyan itinerancy and order. Another system might have been devised, but Wesleyan Methodism, in its essential principles, would have been no more. The body of the preachers and people in that eventful age remained nobly steadfast in their adherence to the true Wesleyan principles; and, under God, the "Deed of Declaration" was their sheet-anchor in every storm. It has been of equal advantage in more modern times; and its utility and benefits will probably be as lasting as the world, according to the design of its author.

The "Deed of Declaration" being acknowledged, the connectional principle by this means preserved inviolate, the conference very properly consented, that, under certain regulations, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper should be administered in the Methodist chapels, and

divine worship performed in the forenoon of the sabbath; measures which Mr. Wesley himself had anticipated, and for which he had, therefore, provided, both by the preparation of a liturgy, and the formal ordination of some of the preachers. Various financial regulations were also adopted, for the purpose of removing all just ground of suspicion relative to the application of the funds of the connection. These arrangements gave general satisfaction, and were followed by the happiest results. Mutual confidence was preserved between the preachers and people; and spiritual religion spread in almost every direction. Extensive revivals of the work of God broke out in several places; new societies were formed, and older ones were quickened and augmented; and many chapels, of various sizes, were erected and enlarged. Within ten years after Mr. Wesley's death the societies were increased, in Great Britain alone, more than forty thousand; and, in twenty years, they were increased upward of one hundred thousand.

In the year 1811 a bill was brought into the house of lords, the professed object of which was to amend the act of toleration, but which, in fact, went to repeal its most important and beneficial provisions. Had it been made the law of the land, and strictly enforced, it would have effected the entire subversion of the Wesleyan ministry. Its true character was ascertained and an appeal was made to the country, when the petitions against it were so numerous and urgent as to induce its withdrawal. New interpretations having been given to the act of toleration, which, in a great measure, defeated its object, application was made to parliament, during the following year, for a new act of a more definite character, and better suited to the state of the country, which was ultimately conceded. Thomas Allen, Esq., of London, was concerned in the drawing up of this new act; and his exertions, with those

of his friend, the late Joseph Butterworth, M. P., were of especial service in obtaining the invaluable boon. It has secured to the Wesleyan ministry and societies more ample protection than they heretofore enjoyed.

The steady advancement of the work at home was attended by corresponding prosperity abroad. The missions were successfully carried on under the direction of Dr. Coke, who travelled through the kingdom, making collections in the congregations for their support; soliciting subscriptions from wealthy individuals wherever he could gain access; selecting suitable men for the work, both among the itinerants and the local preachers; and, by a regular correspondence with the missionaries, giving counsel and encouragement, as their cases might require. His untiring zeal and perseverance, connected with his superior education and very gentlemanly manners, eminently qualified him for this difficult and weighty service. For many an imprisoned missionary in the West Indies did he obtain liberty by his personal applications to men in power; and several persecuting acts of the local legislatures did he prevail upon the government at home to disallow. From the time of Mr. Wesley's death, in 1791, to the year 1811, under the active and vigilant superintendence of this most benevolent and devoted man, the missionaries in the West Indies and in British North America were increased from twenty-one to forty-three, besides eleven who were employed in the Irish mission among the neglected papists; and the members of society in those foreign stations were increased from six thousand five hundred and twenty-five to thirteen thousand three hundred and eighty-two. The doctor would have introduced a much greater number of labourers into the mission field, had his resources been more ample. Many "home missionaries," preaching in the most destitute and neglected parts of

England, were supported out of the fund from which he drew his supplies for the foreign work.

At the conference of 1813 Dr. Coke, then in the sixty-seventh year of his age, expressed an earnest desire to proceed to the East Indies, for the purpose of establishing a mission there. Eighteen times had he crossed the Atlantic ocean, for missionary objects; yet his godly ardour was unabated, as his conviction of the truth of Christianity, and of its importance to mankind, became increasingly strong and influential. Some of his brethren, recollecting his advanced age, the difficulties which would be necessarily connected with the undertaking, and the serious inconveniences which the missions already in existence would experience in consequence of his departure, attempted to dissuade him from the enterprise, desirable as they confessed it to be. He heard their reasonings and remonstrances; and then, bursting into tears, he exclaimed in a manner which they could not resist, "If you will not let me go, you will break my heart!"

His brethren withdrew their opposition; and this honoured patron and friend of missions, accompanied by James Lynch, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Harvard, Thomas Squance, Benjamin Clough, and John M'Kenny, embarked for the East, in December, 1813, intending to appoint these esteemed men to such fields of evangelical labour as actual observation might recommend. On the third of May following he was found dead in his cabin, having expired, it was believed, in a fit of apoplexy. Thus ended the life and labours of this estimable man, whose name will ever be remembered in honourable association with modern missions. Next to Mr. Wesley, no man was ever connected with the Methodist body who contributed more to extend the blessings of Christianity among mankind.

The mission to the East was not abandoned when the spirit of Dr. Coke fled to paradise, and his remains were committed to the great deep. His companions, though young and inexperienced, proceeded on their voyage, resolved to act as Providence might direct; and on their arrival at the place of their destination, their forlorn situation excited a deep and general sympathy. Money was advanced to them on the faith of the connection at home; and they entered upon their work in full reliance upon the Lord, whose gospel they had come to teach. The mission which they began under these circumstances has already exerted a powerful influence upon the island of Ceylon. It has also long since been extended to the continent of India, and rises every year in interest and importance.

Strange as it may appear, the Wesleyan missions were greatly advanced in consequence of Dr. Coke's departure from Europe, and sudden death. The fact is, the connection had almost entirely relied upon his personal exertions, both in directing the operations of the missions, and in providing the means of their support. When he was no more, the preachers and people awoke from their supineness, and felt the necessity of combined and strenuous efforts, that they might maintain the missions which were already formed, and commence others, which were greatly needed, and in many cases loudly called for. The Rev. Geo. Morley, the superintendent of the Leeds circuit, suggested to his colleagues, and the friends in general, the formation of a missionary society, in that town, by means of a public meeting. They approved of the project; the Rev. Richard Watson and James Buckley were engaged as preachers; and Thomas Thompson, Esq., M. P., consented to take the chair at the meeting, which was well attended, and answered the end proposed. These arrangements were greatly facilitated by the very judicious and efficient co-operation of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, who was

then stationed in the Leeds circuit, and was also the chairman of the district. A new and mighty impulse was thus given to the mission work in the connection. Other places, in swift succession, followed the noble example of Leeds, till the Methodist congregations from the Land's End to the Tweed caught the sacred flame. Collectors offered their services in all directions; the hearts of the people were everywhere impressed and opened by the state of the heathen, and the communication of authentic missionary intelligence; and money was, from year to year, poured into the sacred treasury beyond all former precedent. At the same time missionaries have continued willingly to offer themselves even for the most hazardous and difficult stations; and doors of entrance are almost every year opened in the most unexpected quarters.

One man every person acknowledged to have been raised up by an especial providence in connection with the mission department,—the late Rev. Richard Watson: a man of the richest mental endowments, the whole of which he brought to bear upon this work. He pleaded the sacred cause from the pulpit, the platform, and the press, with a force of argument, an originality and beauty of illustration, a sublimity of thought, and a power of persuasion, which perhaps no man, whether speaker or writer, ever surpassed; and, in union with his brethren, he directed the practical working of the mission system with a sound judgment, and patient, persevering zeal. He wore out his life in this holy service, consumed by the quenchless ardour of his own spirit. More than any other individual, this distinguished minister for a time supplied the place of the lamented Dr. Coke.

It is a striking proof of the providential character of the missions in question, that when the most gifted and efficient agents are removed, the work suffers no declension. After the death of Dr. Coke, whose place it was

thought no other person could supply, the missions prospered beyond all former example; and in some quarters the result has been the same since Mr. Watson finished his brilliant and holy career. Allusion is here particularly intended to the Wesleyan missions in the South seas, where the savage inhabitants of whole islands have abandoned the idols of their fathers; and where the people by thousands have become the spiritual worshippers of God. Civilization there walks hand in hand with Christianity; children, and even old people are gathered together in schools; and persons of all ranks are successfully learning the useful arts. Like the primitive disciples also, these people, constrained by the love of Christ, are panting to carry the gospel into "the regions beyond." The change which has taken place in the spirit and habits of those savage tribes, is so sudden, deep, and extensive,—so obviously above all human power,—that he is blind who cannot see in it the working of that Almighty Spirit by whose agency three thousand persons in Jerusalem were in one day converted from Jewish obstinacy and unbelief to the faith of Christ.

The Wesleyan missionaries, accredited ministers of the connection, are about three hundred and eleven in number. They are assisted in their work by catechists, local preachers, assistants, superintendents of schools, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, artisans, &c.; of whom about two hundred are employed at a moderate salary, and two thousand six hundred afford their services gratuitously. The stations occupied by the missionaries in different parts of the world are about two hundred and four; each station being in general the head of a circuit of towns and villages around, embracing a numerous population brought under evangelical instruction. The principal stations of the society's missionaries are in Western and Southern Africa, Ceylon, Continental India, New South Wales, Van-

Dieman's Land, New-Zealand, Tonga, Habai Islands, Vavou Islands, Fejee Islands, the West Indies, and British North America. To these must be added those in Ireland, Sweden, Germany, France, Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Malta. Schools are conducted by the missionaries themselves, or under their immediate superintendence. Christian worship forms a part of the school arrangements. The holy Scriptures, in the language vernacular on the several stations, are invariably used in the school by those who are sufficiently advanced to read them. The masters and mistresses are selected for their piety and zeal, as well as with a regard to their other qualifications; and the whole system is conducted on the avowed principle of spreading at once the knowledge of letters, and the knowledge of God. The usefulness of mission schools is particularly seen in the raising up of a native ministry. In Ceylon, in the South seas, in Southern Africa, and in Western Africa, are found zealous preachers of divine truth, who received their education in the mission schools; and many of them trace their first religious impressions to the instructions which they enjoyed there. Edward Frazer, whose recent visit to England will not soon be forgotten, is a fine specimen of that native ministry which may be expected to arise in the West Indies, now that slavery is abolished.

The number of scholars, adults and children, taught in the mission schools, is forty-nine thousand two hundred and sixty-six. The members of society under the care of the missionaries, exclusive of those in Ireland, is above sixty-five thousand. Persons belonging to the mission congregations, not in religious society, may be fairly estimated at an equal number. To these may be added the children and adults who are under school instruction; making a total of more than one hundred and eighty thousand persons who are directly receiving spiritual advantage by means of the Wesleyan missions.

In Ceylon, in Africa, in the Friendly Islands, and in New-Zealand, the missionaries employ printing establishments. Valuable translations of the Scriptures, and of various other works, have been effected by the missionaries; by whom, in more than twenty different languages, the gospel is preached to some of the most remote and idolatrous nations of the earth.

For the support of this vast enterprise the Wesleyan societies, assisted by the liberality of the Christian public, raised, in the year 1837, the sum of 83,648*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America considerably outnumbers the sister connection in Great Britain. The societies, which are scattered over an immense tract of country are placed under the care of twenty-eight conferences; which meet annually, and are superintended by six bishops, who are chiefly distinguished from their brethren by the abundance of their labours, and the frequency and length of their journeys. The ministers in general are eminently *travelling* preachers. They follow the settlers into the most remote wildernesses, proclaiming to them the word of life; collecting them together in religious society that they may stir up each other's minds by way of remembrance, and watch over one another in the Lord; administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; that these sons of the forest, in the midst of their daily toils, and far distant from the crowded haunts of men, may not forget the more important business of their salvation, and the strict account which they must render to the Judge of all. But for these itinerant ministers of Christ, oftener seen on horseback, each carrying with him his limited wardrobe and his Bible, than in the study or the parlour, many even of the emigrants from happy England, who have been nursed in Christianity, would never hear of the mercy of their Saviour, and would inevitably fall into practical heathenism.

In the deep woods of America the scene contemplated by Mr. Charles Wesley is beautifully realized:—

> "Ye mountains and vales, in praises abound;
> Ye hills and ye dales, continue the sound:
> Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood;
> For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God!"

And the heart of many a solitary emigrant has beaten with holy joy while singing in the same holy strain,—

> "Atonement He made for every one;
> The debt he hath paid, the work he hath done:
> Shout, all the creation, below and above,
> Ascribing salvation to Jesus's love!"

The missionary energies of the Methodist Episcopal Church are mostly expended upon the Indian tribes, and the scattered white and black population of their own continent. Upward of two thousand Indians are acknowledged as regular members of the church. That church has also a prosperous mission at Liberia, on the African coast, where twelve missionaries are employed; and another at Texas, recently formed, from which the accounts are very encouraging. At this place four large circuits have been formed, and some conversions have already taken place, which give the promise of future success.

The efforts of that church in the cause of education are noble and praiseworthy. In addition to many minor and private establishments, there are, in immediate connection with the several conferences, six collegiate institutions, and one university. Four of these are west of the Alleghany mountains, in the great valley of the Mississippi, and its tributary waters; and three are in the Atlantic states. All of them possess the power of conferring academic degrees. "One of the leading objects of our institutions has been," says Dr. Fisk, the principal of the Wesleyan University, "to secure a religious influence, and a

suitable religious training for our youth. We think, if religion, and that modification of it which we profess, is worth any thing for the parents, it is equally valuable for the children; and if it is beneficial for the world, it should be maintained: and who shall maintain it, if our children forsake the religion of their fathers? In this object the Methodist Church in America has not been disappointed. The God of all grace has specially and signally marked the work with the seal of his approval. We have witnessed many gracious outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon our schools; and a great portion of those who leave these institutions go away with fixed principles of religious doctrine and experience, that will, no doubt, govern their future lives."*

In the Methodist Episcopal Church are three thousand one hundred and six itinerant ministers; two hundred and sixteen who are superannuated; and five thousand seven hundred and ninety-two local preachers. The private members amount to six hundred and eighty-six thousand five hundred and forty-nine; of whom six hundred and five thousand two hundred and twelve are whites, seventy-nine thousand two hundred and thirty-six are coloured, and two thousand one hundred and one are Indians. What hath God wrought since Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor embarked for that continent in the year 1769, with the prayers and blessings of Mr. Wesley!

The Methodist Church in Canada is distinct from that of the United States. It is divided into forty-seven circuits, exclusive of forty-seven mission stations, and employs seventy-eight preachers, with eleven who are supernumerary. The members of society are fourteen thousand. Were it not for the ministry of the Wesleyan preachers in Upper and Lower Canada, many thousands

* Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for December, 1836.

of the British settlers would be entirely destitute of the ordinances of Christianity. The Wesleyan mission among the Canada Indians is full of interest. Of this race of red men, no fewer than fifteen hundred are now regular members of religious society. They have abandoned their savage mode of life, and reside together in villages, where they have schools and places of worship. Two of their native preachers, Peter Jones and John Sunday, have visited England, where their manly sense and sound piety excited the liveliest pleasure.

The Methodist connection in Ireland comprehends forty-nine circuits, and eighteen mission stations; one hundred and sixty preachers, including the missionaries, and those who are on the supernumerary list; and twenty-six thousand two hundred and forty-four members of society. To some persons this number will appear small; but the reason is obvious. The superstitions and errors of popery occupy the minds of a large majority of the people of Ireland, and render them hostile to the truth; while incessant political agitations divert their attention from it. There is another cause, to which few people duly advert. In many parts of Ireland the law is comparatively powerless, and fails to afford adequate protection to either the lives or the property of the Protestants. Hence the frequency of Protestant emigration. Within the last fifteen years no fewer than ten thousand members of the Methodist societies in Ireland have left their native country, and sought a more safe and quiet residence in other lands, mostly in America. Not a few of these were as the life-blood of the societies to which they belonged. They were generally persons of some property, the support and stay of the cause in their different localities; and in several instances their removal has led to the withdrawal of the preaching, and the consequent dissolution of the societies and congregations; no other persons in the same places being

able to afford shelter to the servants of God by whom they had been regularly visited. The preservation and revival of Protestantism in that part of the empire are, in the first instance, mainly attributable, under God, to the Christian and patriotic efforts of the two Wesleys, and those of their fellow-labourers and successors, the Methodist preachers. For many years they stood almost alone and unfriended in their generous endeavours to rescue the Irish people from the hateful and degrading tyranny of a wicked and rapacious priesthood, who "destroyed souls for the sake of dishonest gain," and of secular ambition. These upright and devoted men have meekly endured bitter privations and opposition; but their "judgment is with the Lord, and their work with their God." The Romish priests have often stood in the ways leading to Methodist chapels, with horsewhips in their hands, to drive away such members of their congregations as might stray in that direction; and to meet the spiritual necessities of a people thus oppressed, and cruelly kept in ignorance and sin, the Methodist ministers have preached on horseback, in the fairs and markets, where many a deluded votary of Rome has not only heard words whereby he might be saved, but whereby he has been actually turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The venerable Gideon Ouseley, with several of his brethren, has grown gray in this benevolent and holy service.

The state of the Wesleyan connection in England is at present such as not only to afford satisfaction, but to call for gratitude. The ebullition of democratic feeling which took place in some of the societies a few years ago, and was called forth by the spirit of the times, has, through the great mercy of God, entirely subsided; and the attempt which was then made to subvert the Wesleyan plan of discipline has not only failed, but been overruled for good. That discipline stands upon a surer foundation, and is

more deeply rooted in the confidence both of the preachers and the societies than it ever was at any former period. The wisdom and propriety of Mr. Wesley's maxim are now everywhere practically acknowledged: "Do not mend our rules, but keep them, and that for conscience' sake." Many of the societies have, within the last two or three years, been greatly enlarged; never was the Wesleyan ministry so numerously attended, since its commencement, as it is at this day. Expectations of increased spiritual prosperity are generally excited, and more signal displays of the Holy Spirit's power and love, in the conversion of ungodly men, and in the improved piety of believers, are almost everywhere anticipated.

This happy state of things has been brought about by God's blessing upon the firm stand which was made, four or five years ago, in behalf of the true Wesleyan principles, against an unhallowed attempt which was made to subvert them. To break down the hedge of the discipline by which the purity of the body had till that period been preserved, and secure for every preacher the liberty to do what was right in his own eyes during the intervals of Conference, an appeal was made to the Courts of Chancery, which not only failed entirely of its object, but obtained for Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and the discipline of the body founded upon it, the direct sanction of his Honour, Mr. Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, and of the Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst: so that the opposition then raised turned out, by God's overruling providence, to the fullest establishment of that godly order which it was intended for ever to sweep away. The names of John Burton, James Wood, John Marsden, James Fildes, and their brethren, the trustees of the Oldham-street chapel in Manchester, and of Robert Newton, the chairman of the district, against whom the suit was directed, and who stood forward with unflinching fidelity in the day of trial,

—resolved to stand or fall with Wesleyan Methodism,—will be transmitted with honour to posterity. In withstanding this attempt to subvert the goodly system of the body, these faithful men were efficiently assisted by the professional talent of their solicitor, T. Percival Bunting, Esq., of Manchester, who was equally concerned with themselves to maintain the system inviolate.

There is another individual who in those times was especially singled out, by a licentious press, as an object of obloquy, for no other reason than this—that he was the ablest advocate of the true Wesleyan system. Enlargement upon this subject would be improper; for JABEZ BUNTING is still living: and long may he live as an ornament and pillar of the connection! It is, however, bare justice to add, that to him, more than to any other man since the death of Mr. Wesley, is the Methodist body indebted for carrying out its principles into practical effect, and for fixing its various institutions upon a permanent and liberal base.

There are about three thousand Wesleyan chapels in England, besides a vast number of other places where God's word is regularly preached, and public prayer-meetings are held. Several of the chapels are of very large dimensions, especially in the principal manufacturing towns, such as Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Huddersfield; and they are filled every sabbath by willing crowds. In Leeds alone the chapels contain four thousand free sittings for the accommodation of the poor; and in many other places the spiritual necessities of the lower classes of society are met in the same liberal manner. The sum of money which Wesleyan Methodism has expended in providing chapel-room for the vastly increasing population of the country, is almost incredible. The number of private members in religious society is two hundred and ninety-six thousand eight hundred and one. The number of ministers, itinerant and supernumerary, is

one thousand and nineteen, who are perfectly united together in the same mind and the same judgment on all the leading subjects of Christian theology.* The important body of local preachers, we presume, cannot be fewer than four thousand.

When the system of Sunday-school instruction was first introduced, it met with Mr. Wesley's cordial approval; and in this service the connection has continued to take an active part. Exclusive of Wales, where the system is extensively pursued, but from which no returns have been recently received, there are in Great Britain three thousand three hundred and thirty-nine Wesleyan Sunday schools, including three hundred and forty-one thousand four hundred and forty-two children, and employing fifty-nine thousand two hundred and seventy-seven teachers, whose services are all gratuitous. In the support of these institutions the sum of about £17,800 is annually expended. Many of them are furnished with libraries, from which the senior scholars, and the families to which they belong, are supplied with books of a pious and useful character. Many excellent day schools have also been formed in connection with Methodist chapels, and their number is increasing every year.

In most of the larger towns, as well as in several villages, there are also Wesleyan tract societies, carried on upon the loan system. Visiters are appointed to different districts, whose office it is to call at every house in order, offering to the families the loan of a religious tract for a given period, and receiving those that were left at the time of the last visit. By this means divine light is diffused among careless and ungodly people; neglected children are often introduced to Sunday schools; and whole families are sometimes induced to sanctify the sabbath, and attend the house of God.

*See note A, at the end of this chapter.

The Naval and Military Bible Society was originally formed by a small number of Wesleyan Methodists, in the year 1779. George Cussons, of Wardour-street, London, took an active part in devising the plan, and in directing its first operations. It afterward obtained high patronage; and has been of incalculable benefit to the brave men who form the army and navy of England.

The Monthly Magazine, which Mr. Wesley instituted about sixty years ago, is still carried on, and widely circulated. It is conducted upon its original theological principles, though it is less polemical in its character than it was in his hands, the circumstances of the times being changed. It is still employed in repelling unjust attacks upon the body, for which, unhappily, the calls are too frequent. To this periodical, the oldest of the kind now in England, there have been added, since Mr. Wesley's death, four others,—the Missionary Notices, the Youth's Instructer, the Cottager's Friend, and the Child's Magazine,—all of which are very extensively read. To the invaluable works of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher there have also been added those of Mr. Benson, Dr. Adam Clarke, Mr. Watson, Mr. Sutcliffe, Mr. Edmondson, Mr. Treffry, and those of his late gifted and lamented son; with a vast number of biographical and other publications, adapted to private and family reading. The literature of the connection, now somewhat voluminous, and in several of its departments extremely rich and valuable, finds its way into many villages and hamlets where other books are little known. The Bible, with one or more of the Wesleyan commentaries, and other books from the Wesleyan press, constitute many a well-read cottage library.

Upward of fifty years ago the Benevolent or Stranger's Friend Society was instituted by some individuals belonging to the Wesleyan body. It appears to have commenced

about the same time both in London and Manchester; and its principles and plan were speedily adopted in most of the large towns of the kingdom. Its design is to afford relief to strangers in the season of want and sickness; and the administration of pecuniary relief is always accompanied by spiritual instruction and prayer. The visiters, male and female, are generally persons of deep piety, well instructed in the things of God, and of admirable zeal and patience. Not a few of them, it is believed, have died by contagious fevers, caught in their enterprise of charity. Many a profligate wanderer from God and righteousness have these messengers of mercy led to the compassionate Saviour of men; and many a valuable life have they been a means of preserving, by the timely supply of food and medicine. Parents, dying of want, have been snatched from the yawning grave and spared to protect and bless their children. In London this society is liberally supported by other denominations of Christians; and he must possess a heart of stone who can read in its annual reports the record of its operations, without tears of sympathy with the sufferers, and of gratitude for the help afforded to them.

In some instances the generous anxiety of the society and congregations to provide accommodation for themselves, and for the people by whom they were surrounded, has led them to erect chapels of larger dimensions and of a more costly kind than their means would justify; and hence debts were accumulated to an amount which excited just and general alarm. To relieve the cases of distress which were thus created, funds have within the last few years been formed for the purpose of calling forth and assisting local exertion; and the last Report of the General Chapel Fund contains the following intelligence:— "The committee are greatly rejoiced to be able to state that the actual debt upon chapels, now extinguished by

the operation of the present Loan Fund, is £93,398; which, added to £51,000, liquidated by the former loan system, makes a grand total of £147,398. For the removal of so great impediments as most of these debts were found to be to the prosperity of the work of God, by the general and steady efforts of the friends of Wesleyan Methodism, the committee cannot but express their gratitude to the great Head of the church, who has so graciously disposed the hearts of his people to devise liberal things." These funds have been greatly indebted to the sound discretion and unwearied zeal of Thomas Marriot, James Heald, John Fernley, Robert Wood, Francis A. West, and Jonathan Crowther, the esteemed treasurers and secretaries: and to the valuable co-operation of Thomas Crook, William Naylor, and John Mason.

To render the Wesleyan ministry increasingly efficient, and better adapted to the character and circumstances of the present times, the Theological Institution was formed in the year 1834. None are admitted as students there but such candidates for the ministry as are approved, in the first instance, by the circuits to which they belong, and the district committees before whom they are severally examined; as well as by the conference, to whom the case of each person is reported. The undertaking has been already crowned with a success far surpassing what could have been reasonably anticipated in so short a time. The theological and literary training which the students have received has been of the greatest advantage; and the benefits are strikingly apparent, both at home and on several of the mission stations. The managing committee are particularly happy in having obtained the services of the Rev. Dr. Hannah, tutor in the several provinces of theological instruction, and those of the Rev. Samuel Jones, A.M., of Trinity College, Dublin, for the classical and mathematical departments. Recent occurrences in

the institution forcibly remind one of what took place in a similar establishment at Trevecka, of which that holy man, John Fletcher, of Madeley, was the head. When he visited "the sons of the prophets" who were under his care, it is said, by his friend and biographer, Joseph Benson, who witnessed what he describes, that, "being convinced that to be filled with the Holy Ghost was a better qualification for the ministry of the gospel than any classical learning, (although that, too, is useful in its place,) after speaking awhile in the school-room, he used frequently to say, 'As many of you as are athirst for this fulness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.' On this many of us have instantly followed him, and there continued two or three hours, wrestling, like Jacob, for the blessing, praying, one after another, till we could bear to kneel no longer. This was not done once or twice, but many times. And I have sometimes seen him on these occasions, once in particular, so filled with the love of God that he could contain no more."* Guarded, as the institution is, and teaching, as it does, the pure principles of Wesleyan theology, it cannot fail to be an extensive and permament blessing to the connection.

The freedom of the connection from heretical opinions is a just occasion of gratitude. The honest boast of Mr. Wesley on this subject is as applicable to the present times as it was ninety years ago, when it was first made. Speaking of "the purity of the religion which had then spread itself so deeply and widely," he says, "I speak particularly with regard to the doctrines held by those among whom it is so extended. Those of the Church of England, at least, must acknowledge this. For where is there a body of people in the realm, who, number for number, so closely adhere to what our Church delivers as

* Life of Mr. Fletcher, p. 139, Am. edit.

pure doctrine? Where are those who have approved and do approve themselves more orthodox, more sound in their opinions? Is there a Socinian or Arian among them all? Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of heresies enumerated by Bishop Pearson, it might be asked, Who can lay any one of these to their charge?"*

Occupying a distinct and peculiar position between strict churchmanship and systematic dissent, the Wesleyan Methodists, amidst the collision of parties, have, within the last few years, been the objects of severe censure both on the right hand and on the left.† They have, however, steadily adhered to the principles upon which their fathers acted from the beginning; and, judging from their past conduct, they are not likely soon to alter their course. Their great calling is that of spreading spiritual religion in the world; the religion which makes men partakers of the divine nature, and prepares them to share in the glories and happiness of the heavenly state, when the turmoils of party, and all the transitory concerns of earth shall have passed away and be forgotten. The principles of strict dissent, including that of the unlawfulness of religious establishments, and the sin of being connected with them,‡ they never can profess without a direct reflection upon the memory of their revered founder; much less can they be parties in any attempt to effect the subversion of the Established Church of this country: and such a formal union with the Established Church as implies an abandonment of their own ministry, and of their peculiar form of discipline, would be equally a violation of Mr. Wesley's design. He executed the Deed of Declaration,

* Works, vol. v, p. 145, Am. edit.

† See note B at the end of this chapter.

‡ On these and other important questions relating to religious establishments, the reader is respectfully referred to the admirable Lectures of Dr. Chalmers on that subject.

as we have already seen, "in order to fix them" (the Methodists) "upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure." The Church, with its three orders of ministers, can never sanction the ordination which the Methodist preachers have received; and those preachers can never resign their charge without sinning against Christ, by whom they conscientiously believe they are called to the office and work of ministers in the church of God. Nor have they any right so to trifle with the consciences of mankind as to withdraw from more than a million of people the religious ordinances and means of salvation which they prefer before all others. There are principles concerned in questions of this nature more deep and momentous than superficial declaimers ever imagine.

On the peculiar character and position of the Methodists, Mr. Wesley makes the following remarks:—"Although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion; and although we frequently use extempore prayer, and unite together in religious society; yet we are not dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges. . . . . We are not seceders; nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning others; we laid the foundation of our work in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin everywhere with showing their hearers how fallen the Church and ministers are. We begin everywhere with showing our hearers how fallen they are themselves."*

* Works, vol. v, p. 227, Am. edit.

NOTE A, PAGE 174.

A modern writer has indeed asserted the contrary. He first attacks the Protestant orthodoxy of Mr. Wesley, and then that of the present Methodist preachers in general. Having given an extract from the celebrated "Minutes of 1770," leaving out sentences which are essential to a correct view of Mr. Wesley's meaning, particularly in the last article, Mr. Conder says, "We can scarcely err in pronouncing the above language irreconcileable with the tenets of the Protestant reformers, and the doctrine of the Thirty-nine Articles, on the subject of justification by faith; and standing, as it does, in the 'Large Minutes,' which are the authorized exposition of the Wesleyan tenets, it seems to commit the whole body to opinions at variance with that cardinal article of Protestantism."—*Analytical View of all Religions*, p. 455.

In answer to these allegations, we observe, 1. The "Minutes" in question are not "the authorized exposition of the Wesleyan tenets," and were never intended to be such. That "exposition" is to be found in the first series of Mr. Wesley's sermons, and in his "Notes on the New Testament." The passage which Mr. Conder has quoted was part of a conversation between Mr. Wesley and his preachers, not on the entire question of a sinner's justification before God, but on certain Antinomian abuses of the doctrine of justification by faith; a doctrine which Mr. Wesley held as tenaciously and consistently as any man that ever lived. The preachers with whom the conversation was held, and for whose use principally it was published, never, for a moment, supposed him to deny the doctrine which, up to that period, had been the most prominent subject of his very effective ministry, as it subsequently was to the end of his life.

2. When Mr. Wesley found that his meaning was misapprehended by persons whom he esteemed, he, and the preachers in concurrence with him, published the following explanatory declaration :—

"*Bristol, Aug.* 9, 1771.

"Whereas, the doctrinal points in the minutes of a conference held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour justification by works; now the Rev. John Wesley, and others, assembled in conference, do declare, that we had no such meaning; and that we abhor the doctrine of justification by works, as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doeth not good works, where there are time and opportunity; yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, from first to last, either in whole or in part."

This declaration was signed by Mr. Wesley and fifty-three of his preachers.—*Watson's Life of Mr. Wesley*, p. 219.

Now had it accorded with the views of Mr. Conder to lay before his readers this declaration of Mr. Wesley, disavowing the meaning which had been given to the minutes, it would at once have been seen that "the whole body" of the Wesleyan Methodists are so far from being "committed to opinions at variance with that cardinal article of Protestantism,"—justification by faith,—by the writings of their venerated founder, that they are actually pledged by him to this doctrine, as strongly as they could have been by any Protestant confession in Europe.

3. In the extract which Mr. Conder has produced, Mr. Wesley says, "We have received it as a maxim, that a man is to do nothing in order to justification. Nothing can be more false. Whosoever desires to find favour with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' So God himself teaches by the Prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents should do works meet for repentance. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?" To fix the charge of antiprotestantism upon Mr. Wesley, on account of this statement, Mr. Conder adduces the twelfth article of the Church of England: "Albeit good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring necessarily of a true and lively faith." To prove a correct discrepancy between this article and Mr. Wesley's minutes, Mr. Conder adds, "Mr. Wesley is speaking of works done 'in order to justification,' and unconnected with faith in Jesus Christ." The answer is, most assuredly he is: and as the article speaks on a widely different subject, there is no contradiction between one and the other. The article speaks of "good works," in the strict theological sense of the expression; works which spring from "lively faith," and therefore, also, from love to God; works which flow from a renovated nature, are done in obedience to God's will, and with a reference to his glory. Mr. Wesley speaks of "works meet for repentance;" works which become a man who has the sentence of death in his own conscience, who feels the entire corruption of his own nature, and sees the wrath of God hanging over his head. This man can never be justified, but by faith in the sacrifice of Christ. But suppose faith does not come immediately after he is awakened to a discovery of his wretched and perishing condition; for justifying faith, in a very impor-

tant sense, is the gift of God; how is he to wait for it? in the unrestrained practice of all his former wickedness, or in the diligent and prayerful use of the means of grace? "Let him," says Mr. Wesley, quoting the words of Isaiah, "'cease to do evil, and learn to do well;'" and thus wait upon the Lord till he is able to believe to the saving of his soul. Is it for such teaching that "John Wesley" is to be hated and branded as a heretic from age to age? Who then is orthodox? Is Mr. Conder himself? Would he teach a man who is convinced of sin, that, because he can be justified only by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, he may swear, and lie, and get drunk, and steal, and break the sabbath? or would he teach the man to break off these sins by repentance, and wait upon God in the diligent use of the means of grace? "But," it may be said, "the works which Mr. Conder in this case recommends are not 'good works,' properly speaking." The answer is, Certainly they are not. Mr. Wesley never said they were. He positively asserts the contrary in a hundred places, as Mr. Conder would have found, if he had thought it worth his while to read the writings of this deeply-injured man. "But," it may be added, "Mr. Wesley says, that 'works meet for repentance are to be done, that the penitent man may obtain the favour of God.'" Will Mr. Conder say for what other purpose they are to be recommended? Are they to be done that men may offend God, and dishonour his name? or are they to be submitted to as a part of that order in which men are to wait upon him, that they may receive that richer influence of the Spirit without which they cannot believe to the saving of their souls?

Having most illogically and unaccountably assumed, that "works meet for repentance" are identical with "good works, which spring from a lively faith," Mr. Conder quotes the twelfth article of the English Church to prove that Mr. Wesley departed from the true Protestant

principles. And now that we have, we trust, satisfactorily refuted this fallacious argument, we will adduce the same authority as that to which he appeals, to prove that Mr. Wesley was perfectly orthodox on the point in question. In the liturgy of the Church we find the following admonition:—"Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart." These are "works meet for repentance;" and the Church declares, that "the Scripture moveth us," not once or twice merely, but "in sundry places," to the performance of them. For what purpose are they required? The Church says, "To THE END THAT *we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.*" The language of the minutes is a mere echo of the liturgy.

Will Mr. Conder still contend that, on this point, Mr. Wesley was antiprotestant? Then we will invite his attention to the following explanation, given by Mr. Wesley himself:—With respect to "the nature of justification. It sometimes means our acquittal at the last day. (Matt. xii, 37.) But this is altogether out of the present question; that justification whereof our articles and homilies speak, meaning present forgiveness, pardon of sins, and, consequently, acceptance with God. . . . .

"I believe the condition of this is faith: (Rom. iv, 5, &c.:) I mean, not only that without faith we cannot be justified; but, also, that as soon as any one has true faith, in that moment he is justified.

"Good works follow this faith, but cannot go before it: (Luke vi, 43:) much less can sanctification, which implies a continued course of good works, springing from holiness of heart. But it is allowed, that entire sanctifi-

cation goes before our justification at the last day. (Heb. xii, 14.)

"It is allowed, also, that repentance, and fruits meet for repentance go before faith. (Mark i, 15; Matt. iii, 8.) Repentance absolutely must go before faith; fruits meet for it, if there be opportunity. By repentance I mean conviction of sin, producing real desires and sincere resolutions of amendment; and by fruits meet for repentance, forgiving our brother, (Matt. vi, 14, 15,) ceasing from evil, doing good; (Luke iii, 4, 9, &c.;) using the ordinances of God, and, in general, obeying him according to the measure of grace which we have received. (Matt. vii, 7; xxv, 29.) But these I cannot, as yet, term good works; because they do not spring from faith and the love of God" —*Wesley's Works*, vol. 5, p. 35, Am. edit.

4. The minutes which Mr. Conder has quoted led, as is well known, to a long and ardent controversy, in which Mr. Fletcher took a decided part. This holy man confessed, as did Mr. Wesley himself, that the minutes, not being intended for popular use, were incautiously worded. According to common justice, he explained them by the general tenour of Mr. Wesley's preaching and writings, and then demonstrated, I believe, to the satisfaction of every candid man in England, their consistency with the Scriptures of truth, and with the recorded sentiments of Baxter, Flavel, Dr. Owen, and others of the Puritan and Nonconformist divines. If Mr. Conder thinks otherwise, let him answer Mr. Fletcher's "Checks." Till this is done, it is the veriest begging of the question to talk of the antiprotestantism of the minutes.

What then can be said concerning Mr. Conder's attack upon Mr. Wesley's orthodoxy as a Protestant? Did he not know that the sense which he has affixed to the minutes Mr. Wesley publicly, solemnly, and in the name of God, disclaimed? Did he not know that Mr. Fletcher

had, with Mr. Wesley's concurrence, fixed their true meaning, and contended for their Scriptural and Protestant character? If he did not know these things, he was inexcusable when he undertook to write concerning Mr. Wesley, especially in a tone of authority and censure; for ample information was within his reach. That he did know these things, and intended, by his silence, to deceive his readers, I cannot, I will not believe. He is a Christian gentleman, and could not so offend against righteousness and truth.

Mr. Conder has not yet done. He denies the Protestantism of many of the Wesleyan Methodists, as well as that of Mr. Wesley. Pursuing the same subject, he says, "In point of fact, there prevails a considerable diversity within the Wesleyan body, as among the clergy of the Established Church, upon these points. Although the Wesleyans are avowedly Arminian Methodists, acknowledging that distinctive appellation, yet many of their popular preachers have not scrupled to hold the same language as the evangelical clergy, and others of similar views; while in some parts of the connection the doctrine of justification by faith has been either incautiously or more boldly impugned, and views maintained differing little from the Romish theology."

Sentences more unjust, and more misleading than these, were never penned, and never committed to the press. 1. It is here intimated that, as professed Arminians, the Wesleyans should deny that sinners are justified through faith in Christ. It is therefore mentioned as a matter of surprise that some of the Methodist preachers have not "scrupled" to use the same language on that subject that evangelical ministers in general use. Now, what is the fact? Did James Arminius, the theological professor of Leyden, deny this cardinal doctrine of all Protestant churches? No more than he denied the being of a God;

and the writer who makes such an assertion is either deceived himself, or intends to deceive others. No man ever lived who more clearly and explicitly asserted the true Protestant doctrine of justification through faith in Christ, than did that holy man and profound divine. On this topic he declared his full concurrence in the views of Calvin, as expressed in his Institutes. With respect to the point in question, the reader is referred with great pleasure to Mr. James Nichols' very able and faithful "Translation of the Works of Arminius," published a few years ago, in two octavo volumes. It is one of the most important publications of modern times.

2. Mr. Conder asserts that serious differences on this great question exist even now in the Wesleyan body; and that, in some parts of the connection, the doctrine of justification by faith is even "openly impugned," and a doctrine taught which is substantially the same as that of the Church of Rome. That church, according to the Council of Trent, pronounces a curse upon all who assert the doctrine of justification by faith; and maintains that men are justified by personal holiness. I have been connected with the Wesleyan ministers, as one of their body, more than thirty-four years. During this time I have conversed with hundreds of them, at district-meetings, conferences, and on other occasions; have heard them preach, have corresponded with them by letter; and have been present with them times without number when doctrinal questions have been under examination; and I solemnly declare, that I never met with one to whom Mr. Conder's description applies; nor did I ever hear of such a man. This matter cannot be allowed to rest. Mr. Conder must either produce proof of his most astounding assertion, or, as a man of truth, he must cancel the injurious statement. A person who teaches the doctrine which Mr. Conder attributes to "some parts of the connection" of Wesleyan

Methodists, is no more a Wesleyan than Mr. Conder is a Jew. If the Wesleyan "trumpet" has, on any subject whatever, given "a certain sound," and that for a hundred years, it is on this one,—That sinners are freely justified from the guilt of all past sin by the simple exercise of faith in the sacrifice of Christ; a faith preceded and accompanied by repentance, and followed by peace of conscience, and by inward and outward holiness. This is the very substance of Methodist preaching. Those "parts of the connection" where a contrary doctrine is taught, Mr. Conder is bound to specify. For myself, I know them not. I never heard of them. Their existence I deny.

The confusion and inconsistency of Mr. Conder's account must indeed, of itself, awaken suspicion of its truth. It would seem, from one part of his statement, that the popish error concerning justification is the current doctrine of the Wesleyan body; for it is made a matter of wonder, as we have seen, that "their popular preachers" have not *scrupled* to use the language of Protestants, as if they knew that popery was the doctrine of their brethren. The reader is left to infer that the preachers who are not "popular," all teach the popish tenet that men are sanctified before they are justified, and that they are justified not by faith but by sanctification. And yet afterward Mr. Conder intimates that it is only "in some parts of the connection" that popery is taught, and the doctrine of justification by faith is "impugned." His words imply the contrary propositions, that in the Wesleyan connection popery is the rule, and Protestantism the exception; and that Protestantism is the rule, and popery the exception. And what does he mean by "some parts of the connection" as holding the Romish theology? Does he not know that the Wesleyan ministers itinerate; so that the same "parts" are alternately occupied by "popular" and unpopular men? that is, according to his account, by men who teach doc-

trines diametrically opposed to each other. Does he think that the congregations are so blind and ignorant as to endure this?

He states, also, that the Protestant doctrine in question is "either *incautiously* or *more boldly* impugned." It seems, then, that there are two modes in which the Wesleyans "impugn" this great truth. Some do it "incautiously," and others do it "more boldly." Will he tell us the meaning of this? We have always been accustomed to think that the absence of caution implies boldness. But if popery, on the subject of justification, really be the doctrine currently taught in many Wesleyan pulpits, as Mr. Conder declares, if his words have any meaning, we ask, in the name of wonder, what need there is in this case for "caution?" When men are violating truth, it is difficult to preserve consistency in their statements.

We strongly suspect that if the Wesleyan body had consented to concur with Mr. Conder in certain political measures to which he attaches importance, but which they presume to think would be positively injurious, we should not have heard of their popery in his present publication.

NOTE B, PAGE 179.

The last aspersion upon the Wesleyan body that we have observed, as coming from the friends of the Established Church, is that of Dr. Croly. In a note to his Sermon on the Reformation, just published, we have the following statement:—"There is no intention in these remarks of including in schism all who may not adopt the discipline of the Establishment. The Church of Scotland differs from the Church of England in little more than name. The labours of Dr. Chalmers in the cause of establishments have done honour to himself and to his coun-

try. There are sects whose discipline and doctrines are decorous. The Wesleyans even declare themselves friends of the Establishment. Yet why can they not perceive the proverbial weakness of neutrality, or how near the inactive *Video meliora, proboque* is to the *Deteriora sequor?*"

The "Wesleyans" can bear without a murmur the incessant railings of the Church's Gathercoles, and even the mendacity of the Church of England Quarterly Reviewers. Persons who write invectives for bread are generally harmless in proportion to the noise which they attempt to make. But when respectable men, like Dr. Croly, come forward, as in the case before us,

"Willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike,"

and determined to keep up a perpetual irritation in the minds of those who wish them no harm, we think we have just ground of complaint. The "Wesleyans" are not the people that he describes. They have neither been "neutral" nor "inactive" in the cause of religion, morality, social order, and the institutions of the country. When one of their ministers a few years ago assumed the character of an agitator against the Establishment, and refused to abstain from such work in future, they dismissed him; and would do the same again, if there were the like occasion. What does Dr. Croly wish us to do? Does he want us to declare our approbation of all that is taught in the national Church, and of all the men that officiate within her pale? Does he wish us to avow our conviction that the Church meets all the religious and moral wants of the community? If we should do this, there is not a man in England that would believe us, not even Dr. Croly himself. Does he wish us to burn our hymn-books, turn our chapels into warehouses, trample on the bones of our fathers, who sleep around our places of worship, scatter

our societies and congregations, recall our missionaries, break up our negro schools and congregations, and the schools and congregations of converted savages in Southern Africa and in the South seas, and let them all relapse into heathenism? He cannot think that an act which would, as we conscientiously believe, involve such an unparalleled amount of guilt, could really conduce to the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind. Can he certainly tell us what would be the effect, upon his own church, of the dissolution of the Wesleyan connection? What then does he mean? He insinuates evil against us in Latin. We repel his insinuation in plain English, for we have nothing to conceal, and we think that the conduct which the body has pursued for a hundred years should have screened us from such a suggestion as that which he has placed upon record. With all deference to the doctor, whom we sincerely esteem, especially for the noble Protestant heart which beats in his breast, we not only *see* and *approve* what is right, but *follow* it too, though not with the diligence and ardour that become us.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Such are the leading facts connected with the rise and progress of what is called "Wesleyan Methodism." The entire system, comprehending all its arrangements, some writers have attributed to the genius of John Wesley, stimulated partly by piety and benevolence, partly by an indefinite something which they have called "enthusiasm," and partly by ambition. He had no preconcerted plan whatever when he entered upon his career as an itinerant preacher, but followed what he believed to be the open-

ings and guidance of Divine Providence, often in direct opposition to his own prejudices and habits; and it is remarkable that he never had occasion to retrace any of the steps which he had taken, or to abandon any of the measures which he had adopted for the advancement of religion. What the world called "Methodism" he was accustomed to denominate "the work of God," especially when considered in reference to its effects upon individuals. And such it unquestionably is, if we are to judge according to the principles laid down in the gospel. The members of the Methodist societies are, in the first instance, convinced of sin, and weep and pray under a consciousness of their guilt and danger, as did the three thousand Jews on the day of pentecost, Saul at Damascus, and the jailer at Philippi. Like those ancient penitents, they obtain relief, not by works of law, much less by worldly amusements, or gay company, but by believing in Christ as the great and only atonement. When they have thus come to Christ, trusting in his sacrifice and intercession, they find rest to their souls. Their consciences are purged from dead works; guilty fear gives place in their minds to filial love; sin ceases to have the dominion over them; they hate it, and abstain from all appearance of it. They love God; they sanctify his sabbaths; they reverence his name; they delight in his ordinances; and they daily worship him in spirit and in truth. They love one another; they take pleasure in each other's society, and delight to serve each other in love; joyfully anticipating an endless union in heaven with Christ, their common Lord and Saviour. At the same time they cherish a kind, generous concern for the welfare of the whole human race; and hence their exertions to bring mankind, both at home and abroad, into the same holy and happy state with themselves. It cannot be said that all have attained to this; but this is the standard to which they are all taught

to aspire: and all this is unquestionably realized by tens of thousands of people in these realms, whose spirit and conduct are daily open to the public observation.

Wherever these fruits of righteousness are, there God is present in the power of his Spirit. They are not produced by any mere efforts of human nature. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean" but God himself? Repentance is the gift of Christ, Acts v, 31. The Holy Spirit takes away the heart of stone, and gives the heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi, 26. "It is God that justifieth," Rom. viii, 33. It is "the God of hope" that "fills" men with "all joy and peace in believing," Rom. xv, 13. It is he that sends forth the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of believers, "crying, Abba, Father;" and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, Gal. iv, 6; Rom. viii, 16. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes men free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii, 2. The holy love of God and man is an emanation from him, the fountain and pattern of all excellence. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," 1 John iv, 7. It is the Father that makes men meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i, 12; and of those who, possessing this meetness, groan to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven, it is said, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God," 2 Cor. v, 5.

The religion which is taught in the Methodist pulpits, and exemplified in the experience and conduct of the Methodist societies in general, has ever been regarded by its adherents as the very Christianity which is described in the New Testament, and was practised in the apostolical churches. The resemblance between the primitive Christians and the Wesleyan societies has indeed been confessed by a competent and disinterested witness, Archdeacon Paley, himself not very prone to indulge in enthu-

siastic ardour, or flights of imagination. "After men became Christians," says he, "much of their time was spent in prayer and devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in an affectionate intercourse with one another, and correspondence with other societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or the modern Methodists."*

The Methodist ministry, under which these effects are produced, has, from the beginning, unquestionably been sanctioned by the divine influence and blessing. The success of Mr. Wesley's preaching has been attributed to his simple and effective eloquence, gently touching the springs of human action; and to the interesting objects by which he was often surrounded, especially when addressing multitudes in the open air. But those who thus speak forget that the same effects were produced under the preaching of other men, many of whom were "rude in speech;" and that they were also produced in plain chapels, in barns, in private houses, and in the entire absence of those objects which are assumed to possess a charm so powerful. It should be observed, too, that the preaching in question was not formed according to the rules of art, like that of the French orators who figured in the court of Louis XIV. It was not characterized by pretty and elegant turns of thought; nor was it generally addressed to persons of poetic and tender sensibilities; but more frequently to men who were brutally ignorant, and diabolically wicked. Yet many of these were converted from the error of their way. Theirs was not a sentimental conversion, but a thorough renewal of their nature. They were turned from the love and practice of sin to both inward and outward holiness; and the change was perma-

* Evidences of Religion, Part First, chap. i.

nent. From the time of their conversion till their spirits returned to God, their deportment was blameless, and their spirit devout, cheerful, and benevolent.

Here again, according to the Bible, (and its teaching on this subject is confirmed by true philosophy,) the hand of God is to be acknowledged. Even apostolical preaching, without the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, must have been powerless and ineffectual. "I have planted," says St. Paul, "and Apollos watered;" but the apostle, with all his acquired learning and inspired theology, and Apollos, eloquent as he was, and mighty in the Scriptures, must both have laboured in vain, had no supernatural agency been put forth. "God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," 1 Cor. iii, 6, 7. Without him talents of the highest order may be put in requisition; philosophy, learning, fancy, argument, taste, may put forth all their energies; yet the callous and depraved heart of fallen man will not surrender itself to Christ. Men are saved only when the gospel comes to them "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i, 5. Throughout the New Testament, therefore, the success of the Christian ministry is assumed to be a subject of prayer to the God of all grace. For when Christ is not present, in the power of his Spirit, the demon of human depravity sets the preacher at defiance. "The carnal mind," which "is enmity against God," will never yield to any power less than divine. The Wesleys and their fellow-labourers were eminently men of prayer. They called incessantly upon God, that he would not only touch their lips with fire, but apply the truths of his law and gospel to the understandings and consciences of their hearers; and the result is matter of history. The promised sign was given. Thousands of men, proverbially profligate and wicked,

were undeniably made partakers of the divine nature; and wherever the "clean heart" and the "right spirit" are found, they exist as the direct "creation" of God, Psalm li. 10.

That a great improvement has taken place in the Established Church of this country is a fact which no candid observer can deny, and in which every good man must rejoice. There has been within her pale a great increase of spiritual religion, and of active, laborious zeal. The efforts of Churchmen in providing evangelical instruction in neglected districts at home, in the distribution of the holy Scriptures, in extending the benefits of education, and in sending missionaries to the heathen, exceed those of former times beyond all comparison. Several of her children delight to contemplate this improved state of things as a benefit which has been conferred upon her altogether independent of Methodism, and especially of Wesleyan Methodism. Far be it from us to say any thing on this subject that can be considered justly offensive to any sincere and upright Churchman who is sensitive concerning his church's honour. The facts of the case, however, should be stated, that disinterested observers may form their own judgment on the question. We think it undeniable, 1. That this revival of spiritual religion did not appear in the Church till the voices of the Wesleys and Mr. Whitefield had been heard in almost every part of the land, and the influence of their labours was strongly felt. 2. That several of the more devout, zealous, and influential of the clergy, during the last century, were avowedly in close connection with the Wesleys. Such were Piers and Perronet in Kent; Grimshaw in the west of Yorkshire; Sellon in Leicestershire; Fletcher in Madeley; and Crosse in Bradford. Mr. Crosse even proposed to resign his vicarage, and become a Methodist preacher; and for one year his name actually stood on

the Minutes of Conference. He was induced to abandon his design by the advice of Dr. Coke and of some other Methodist preachers, who thought that he might more effectually serve the cause of Christ in the Church than in the Methodist connection. Mr. Berridge, and some others of the clergy, stood in nearly the same relation to Mr. Whitefield, in whose tabernacles they not unfrequently preached. 3. Several others of the more pious and spiritual of the clergy were for many years the personal friends of the two Wesleys. Though some of them disapproved of the anti-Calvinistic theology of the Wesleys, and of the alleged irregularities of Methodism, yet they either corresponded with the two brothers, invited them to preach in their churches, or had frequent interviews with them, and were unquestionably affected and stimulated by their spirit and proceedings. This was the case with Walker and Thompson in Cornwall; Vivian in Devonshire; Venn in Huddersfield; Crooke in Leeds and Hunslet; Hervey in Northamptonshire; Jones in Southwark; Stillingfleet in Hotham; Jesse in the east of Yorkshire; Easterbrook in Bristol; Simpson in Macclesfield; and many others. 4. Within the last fifty years many clergymen, of the character in question, have been members of Wesleyan families in which they received their early religious light and impressions. Others of them were educated by Lady Huntingdon, at her College of Trevecka, and were first made acquainted with divine truth in connection with what is called Calvinistic Methodism. 5. Wesleyan Methodism has greatly contributed to raise the tone of public feeling on the subject of religion, so as to induce greater circumspection in the clerical character than was previously either expected or required. Irregularities which were formerly tolerated in the ministers of religion, as matters of course, would now become subjects of general complaint and animadversion. The

influence of the ministry is greatly increased by its superior purity. 6. It will hardly be denied that, in some instances at least, among other motives Churchmen have been stimulated by the active and aggressive character of Methodism to the erection of new churches, the formation of schools, and the establishment of Sunday evening lectures; from all of which the church has been essentially benefited, and the national interests promoted. Whatever of spiritual good exists in any section of the universal church is produced by the gracious power of Him who worketh all in all; and if the Holy Spirit has, in his merciful sovereignty, made Methodism, in any of its forms, a means of spiritual life and purity to the Establishment of this country, there is neither candour nor piety in the denial of the fact.*

That the Church of England has been of the greatest advantage to the Wesleyan connection, considered as a distinct community, is freely conceded. It was in the Church that the venerable founders of our societies were trained, and Mr. Wesley declares himself to have been more confirmed in the doctrine of salvation by faith by reading the homilies, than by any other means. Sellon and Fletcher, the ablest defenders of the Wesleyan theology against the attacks which were made upon it during the last century, were both clergymen. When the early Methodist preachers went through the land, declaring the necessity of inward religion, as distinguished from mere forms of worship and from moral duties, they found the way so far made ready for them by the Church, that an appeal to the liturgy, articles, and homilies, was almost

* "No fear of misrepresentation, or of obloquy, shall ever deter me from declaring my belief that Wesley and Whitefield were chosen instruments of Providence, for giving a great impulse to religious feeling when it was needed most."—*Southey's Colloquies*, vol. i. p. 383.

everywhere responded to; and a nominal Christianity prepared the way for that "kingdom" which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The incomparable liturgy of the Established Church is regularly used in many of the Wesleyan chapels in England, and in all the mission chapels in the West Indies. Translations of it have been made by Wesleyan missionaries into various languages, for the use of their congregations, especially in the East. It is also always used in the administration of the Lord's supper, both at home and abroad. At the same time the sanctified learning which is displayed in the profound and orthodox writings of the divines of the Church of England has ever been of the greatest benefit to the Wesleyan body, as it has to the more serious and religious part of the community in general. This is a debt which can never be repaid. The writings of Churchmen in opposition to infidelity, popery, and the Arian and Socinian heresies, are beyond all praise.

Subsequently to the rise of Methodism there was also a revival of evangelical religion among the dissenters, toward which the ministry of Mr. Whitefield contributed more directly than that of the two Wesleys. Yet many of the dissenting ministers, and not a few private members of their churches, have either belonged to Wesleyan families, or at one period of their lives were connected with the Wesleyan societies. Indirectly, therefore, as in the case of the Established Church, the dissenters are under considerable obligations to the labours of John Wesley, strongly as some of them may express their dislike for his theology, and his views of ecclesiastical order. The cold and chilling Arianism which was introduced into the dissenting churches at the beginning of the last century, led to the Socinianism of Taylor, Priestly, and Belsham; but other churches were formed, in almost all the large

towns of the kingdom, which not only maintain all the peculiarities of revealed truth, but exert a salutary influence upon society, and manifest a most exemplary zeal in the cause of Christian missions.

That Wesleyan Methodism has been of great advantage to the British nation, few persons, it is presumed, who are competently informed on the subject, will deny. "Sin is a reproach to any people;" as well as the sure forerunner of confusion and ruin. Even law is comparatively powerless, however righteous it may be in principle, unless the consciences of the people are duly impressed with the obligations of religion and morality. When masters are tyrannical, and servants are perfidious; when husbands and wives are faithless to each other; when governors are careless of the public weal, and subjects are impatient of all restraint; when the rich are selfish and overbearing, and the poor are envious and dishonest; when, in the various relations of life, tradesmen and merchants are regardless of justice and truth; when parents are neglectful of their children's welfare, and children despise and disobey their parents; the people are, by a just retribution of Providence, ripe for destruction: and, though it may for a season be delayed, yet its approach is swift and certain. Misery, in all its forms, personal, domestic, and national, is the inevitable fruit of abounding profligacy and wickedness. The dissolution of the great empires of antiquity is a fearful comment upon this fact.

To ascertain the amount of benefit which Great Britain has derived from Methodism, it will be requisite to advert to the events of the last century. At the beginning of that period, according to the testimony of unexceptionable witnesses, the elements of evil existed in frightful magnitude, and were in full operation. The higher classes were many of them infidel, and the poor were uneducated, igno-

rant, and grossly immoral.* The influence of religion, to a great extent, was withdrawn; and, as the unavoidable consequence, sin prevailed in almost every diversity of form; for religion is the only basis of sound morality, and the only effectual restraint upon the passions and appetites of mankind. If men neither fear nor love God, it is vain to expect from them a faithful attention to the duties of life; for conscience has lost its power.

In the English nation, thus circumstanced, a vast increase of population was about to take place. Wealth, with all its incentives to luxury and indulgence, was about to be everywhere diffused. The factory system, congregating together large masses of people of both sexes, and placing them together in a heated atmosphere, was soon to be extensively introduced. The American war of independence, producing temporary scarcity and want, and inviting attention to the republican form of government, was at no great distance. Then followed the French revolution, with its infidel democracy, and godless theories of social order, inflaming the popular mind and endangering every

* "It was a time of great degeneracy in very many important points. The manners of high life were not indeed so absolutely profligate as in the infamous days of Charles II., but there was a greater degree of general coarseness. Drunkenness had become as much a national vice among the gentry, as it was among the Germans. The learning which the universities imparted was still sound and orthodox,—but there was little of it; and, considering them as schools of morals, the course of life there was better adapted to graduate young men in the brutalizing habits of the society wherewith they were soon to mingle, than to qualify them for reforming it. The church, therefore, was ill supplied with ministers; its higher preferments were bestowed with more reference to political connections than to individual desert; and there never was less religious feeling, either within Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet, and awakened those who slept."—*Southey's Colloquies*, vol, i. pp. 255, 256.

national institution. Had this new state of things commenced while the elements of evil to which we have just adverted, were in full and unrestrained operation, who can calculate the consequences? By the great mercy of God there was religious principle in the country to resist the evils which wealth, revolution, and war were pouring forth in one mighty tide; but it was religious principle which, to a considerable extent, was consequent upon the rise of Methodism. What other agencies might have been called out in the various emergencies to counteract the threatening evils, and secure the public welfare, had that form of Christianity which is denominated Methodism never appeared, we know not; nor does it become us to speculate upon such a subject. What God in his providence has done, we know; what he might have done, we know not. In times of unexampled peril and excitement,—times which it is fearful even to think upon,—it pleased God to preserve this country in unimpaired strength by means of religious principle; and that principle, in a thousand instances, was created by the labours of the Wesleys, and in many others it was greatly raised and invigorated by the same means.

A more loyal man than John Wesley never existed. His loyalty was not a sentiment, or a prejudice, but a principle. It was identified with his Christianity. He succeeded in impressing the same character upon the societies that acknowledge him as their founder. Amidst the disaffection which was produced by the French revolution, and the pinchings of the protracted war, as well as under the terrors of the rampant radicalism of a later period, the loyalty of the Methodist body was steadily maintained; as is known to every one who lived in those times, or has read the official documents of the connection.

The following is an extract from the address of the conference to the societies, in the year 1819, published

amidst the distress, the riots, and the disloyalty of that calamitous period :—" As many of you, to whom this measure of national suffering has been appointed, reside in places where attempts are making, by 'unreasonable and wicked men,' to render the privations of the poor the instruments of their own designs against the peace and the government of our beloved country, we are affectionately anxious to guard all of you against being led astray from your civil and religious duties by their dangerous artifices. Remember you are Christians, and are called by your profession to exemplify the power and influence of religion by your patience in suffering, and by 'living peaceably with all men.' Remember that you belong to a religious society, which has, from the beginning, explicitly recognised as high and essential parts of Christian duty, to 'fear God and honour the king; to submit to magistrates for conscience' sake, and not to speak evil of dignities.' You are surrounded with persons to whom these duties are objects of contempt and ridicule. Show your regard for them, because they are the doctrines of your Saviour. Abhor those publications in which they are assailed, along with every other doctrine of your holy religion: and judge of the spirit and objects of those who would deceive you into political parties and associations, by the vices of their lives, and the infidel malignity of their words and writings. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'

" Be it your care, beloved, who are exposed to this trial, to serve God in all good conscience; to preserve your minds from political agitations; to follow your occupations and duties in life, in peaceful seclusion from all strife and tumults: and God will, in his own time, appear by his providence to your relief. We trust our country to his gracious favour, and doubt not that he will speak good concerning us."*

* Minutes of Conference, vol. v, pp. 62, 63.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation;" and that righteousness is one of the direct fruits of the revival of religion, of which the two Wesleys were among the principal instruments, is matter of public notoriety. They are not Wesleyan Methodists whose names fill the criminal calendars at our assizes, that figure in the police reports, that crowd the hulks, and are sent to our penal settlements. Cornwall, once a land of smugglers and "wreckers," and the terror of seamen, where Methodism has perhaps been embraced by a larger proportion of the community than in any other county, is now pronounced the most moral part of England. There is less crime in Cornwall, considering the number of the people, than in any other district of the land. And this is not a peculiar case. Wherever Wesleyan Methodism prevails it secures the practice of a pure morality; and that, not through the operation of motives derived from expediency, or selfishness, but by implanting in the hearts of the people the fear and love of God, and placing them under the control of a holy and salutary discipline.

The effects of the Wesleyan doctrine and order upon families and individuals are equally beneficial. The people, who receive this teaching, are impressed with the truth, that "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;" and, when this truth is realized, as it is in every penitent believer, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new." Ungodly companions and worldly amusements please no longer. The public house and the noisy hilarity of profane men have no charms for a regenerated mind. Nothing is prized but as it comes from God, and leads to him. The domestic relations are all sanctified. The husband and the wife, the parents and the children, are joined together by a tie far more tender, strong, and enduring, than that of nature. In heaven they neither marry nor

are given in marriage; but the children of God are there indissolubly one in him for ever. Hence their present intercourse with each other is carried on with a reference to their state of final blessedness. They read together, with reverent attention, God's inspired word. They pray together daily. The sabbath, with its sacred joys and duties, is indeed holy and honourable; especially because of the opportunities which it brings for spiritual conversation, and for attendance upon the ordinances of God's house. Thousands of such families are, at this day, connected with the Wesleyan societies. Many of them are poor. Their clothing is mean, and their fare scanty. They know nothing of the elegances and refinements of life. With light and amusing literature they have little acquaintance. But they have the Bible, the incomparable hymns of the Wesleys with a few other well read books of spiritual instruction. The prosperity of religion at home, and the details of missionary labour and success, inspire them with grateful emotion. The world knows them not, but they are known unto the Lord. When death parts them asunder, they sorrow not like those who have no hope, but meekly separate, in compliance with the Lord's will, under the cheerful assurance of again meeting in a land where there is neither death, nor grief, nor pain. The breaking up of families has always been felt as one of the most bitter of those afflictions to which human nature is subjected on account of sin. The religion, therefore, which links them together in an eternal union, and thus, in fact, prevents their hearts from being rent asunder, even by death, is a greater blessing than words can express.

"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that also which is to come." Never, perhaps, was this Scriptural declaration more strikingly illustrated than it has often been in the Wesleyan

connection. The dormant mental powers of many a young man have been effectually roused by the force of his religious convictions; and the development of those powers has excited the surprise of all who were previously acquainted with him. The personal godliness of which he has become a partaker, has restrained him from evil company, from intemperance and from every other kind of vice; and has invested him with a character of sobriety, industry, and uprightness. These have commanded confidence and placed him first in offices of trust and responsibility, and then supplied him with the means of acquiring property, and of being a blessing to his whole neighbourhood. Some of the most substantial and honourable men of business in England have been members of the Wesleyan community; and their success in life hinged entirely upon those qualities which their religion supplied.

But it is with an especial reference to the spiritual interests of mankind that Methodism will ever be considered. And here we find matter of sincere congratulation. Since the commencement of this work, multitudes, far beyond what many persons imagine, have, by God's blessing upon the Wesleyan doctrine and order, been not only reformed, and made decent and moral, but effectually turned to God through Christ. Their understandings have been enlightened by divine truth and grace; their consciences purged from dead works by an application of the blood of Christ; their hearts regenerated and sanctified; and their conduct rendered blameless and useful. They have become examples of holiness and devotion; and have lived the life of faith, and of happy intercourse with God. Piety has, to them, been a source of pure and elevated enjoyment under all the trials and sorrows of their earthly pilgrimage.

If there is a period when the true characters of men appear, it is that in which they anticipate a speedy re-

moval into the world of spirits, and to "reap," through everlasting ages, according as they have "sown" during the present life. The strength of their attachment to earthly objects, their confidence in God, and submission to his will, are then put to the severest test. "A death-bed is a detecter of the heart." To endure the pains of mortal sickness and actual dissolution, and the still severer pains of separation from connections the most tender and endeared, and to enter upon an untried and endless state of existence,—not with the dogged firmness of a stoic, nor the profane and unnatural indifference of an infidel, but with calm resignation, with penitent, but unfaltering confidence in the sacrifice, the power, the love, and the faithfulness of Christ, and in joyful hope of a blessed immortality through him,—is an object of the highest interest and importance; and one in which the power of Christianity was most blessedly seen in the early ages of the church. In this, too, we think the nature and value of that form of Christianity to which the name of "Methodism" is given, are strikingly seen. Some of the holiest and most sublime scenes the writer of these pages has ever witnessed, or ever expects to witness on this side of eternity, have been in the dying chambers of persons belonging to the Wesleyan body: some of them poor and uneducated, except in religion; and others of them surrounded by every means of personal indulgence, and all the enjoyments of domestic life. The periodicals, and other publications of the connection, have, from the beginning, borne ample testimony on this subject. To those who are enduring the pangs of bereavement, the consolation arising from the remembrance of the unfeigned piety and peaceful end of their departed friends, is of the most solid and durable kind, and mightily alleviates the anguish of separation. They weep; for "nature unreproved" may drop her tears at the remembrance of the

pious dead; but their tears of sorrow for those that sleep in Jesus are also tears of gratitude, of joy, and of hope.

How many human spirits are now in the heavenly paradise, brought thither by God's blessing upon the ministry of the Wesleys, and upon the plans which they adopted and sanctioned; and how many, in times to come, will be brought thither in connection with those plans; are questions on which we have no right to speculate. They are among the "secret things" which "belong unto the Lord our God." They will, however, be disclosed when the almighty Judge shall send forth his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, to gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven; and when pardoned and sanctified men shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

There are persons who can see nothing in the ministry and success of the Wesleys, and of their fellow-labourers and successors, but unmixed and inexcusable evil. With such persons, at present, we will enter into no dispute. We think that the conversion of men from misery and sin to holiness and peace, and the rescuing of myriads of deathless spirits from perdition, of greater moment than the maintenance of any mere system of church order whatever. Those who think otherwise are welcome to their own opinion. It is one which we are not inclined to adopt. To the members of the Wesleyan societies these pages are principally addressed; and we think that, on a review of the rise, progress, and present state of our community, at the conclusion of this, the first century of our existence, united and grateful thanksgiving to God will be acknowledged as an appropriate, and, indeed, imperative duty. In the autumn of the year 1839 the Centenary of Methodism will be celebrated; as it will then be just one

hundred years since Mr. Wesley formed the first of the united societies.

God forbid that in this celebration we should glory in man. If we do, we shall grieve the Holy Spirit, and bring a blight upon our work. God will "spread dung upon our faces," and spurn both us and our unhallowed services. He is jealous of his honour; and the glory which belongs to him he will not share with any other being, either in earth or heaven. The view of Methodistical agency and success which is presented in these pages is not intended to inspire pride and vain glory, but to show the nature and extent of the benefit for which our thanks ought to be presented to the God of all grace. The Wesleys, and their noble companion in evangelical labour, Mr. Whitefield, were indeed extraordinary men; but they were not men *casually* brought into existence, and whose powers were *casually* called forth by the circumstances of the times, as a profane and godless philosophy would insinuate. They were raised up by God, as the instruments of his mercy to the world. The peculiar talents with which they were endued were his gift. Their piety, their zeal for the divine glory, their yearning pity for ignorant and wicked men, their meek endurance of opposition, and their patience in toil and suffering, were all the effects of his holy inspiration. The whole of their success in turning men to Christ depended upon the exertion of the divine power; for no man can come to Christ unless he be drawn by the Father. The good that was in them was all of God; and whatever was in them of weakness, infirmity, error, and sin, was of themselves. While, therefore, we think upon our fathers in this work,—of the generations that have entered into rest through their labours,—of the tens of thousands, in different parts of the world, who are following in the same path,—of the various agencies which are now employed to extend and perpetu-

ate this work,—and of the cheering tokens of spiritual prosperity which we still witness,—let us beware of confining our attention to second causes. The hand of God is in all this; and the entire glory must be given to his infinite goodness. He is "great in counsel, and mighty in work."

The manner in which this work has been carried on is worthy of especial observation. Luther gave it as his opinion, that revivals of religion rarely last more than one generation, or about thirty years. This has continued more than thrice that period, and presents no signs of general decay. When the two Wesleys were unable to meet the wants of the neglected population of this kingdom, and their brethren in the ministry almost everywhere refused to unite with them, it pleased God to raise up from among their own spiritual children the assistance that was needed. Nor has there ever been wanting, from that period to the present time, men suitably qualified to carry on this work in all its departments. Though no one man could supply the place of Mr. Wesley, yet several have been raised up to exemplify his principles, and carry out his plans into practical effect. Some of them have been particularly suited to labour in the mission field; others, to extend the work at home; and others again, to give a right direction and character to the whole. Who that knows the history of the connection can forbear to thank God for the manly sense, the sound discretion, the unbending integrity, the deep religious experience, the governing wisdom of Alexander Mather? the godly sincerity, the unaffected piety, the edifying and spiritual ministry of John Pawson? the frank and generous spirit, the charming and effective eloquence of Samuel Bradburn? the sound learning, the theological and biblical erudition, the powerful, awakening, instructive ministry of Joseph Benson? the unwearied diligence and application, the

varied scholarship, the simple, argumentative, and energetic preaching of Adam Clarke? the comprehensive intellect, the sublime conceptions, the rich and vigorous imagination, the unwearied missionary zeal, the personal sanctity of Richard Watson? These eminent men, with their equally devout and faithful, but less distinguished, brethren, devoted all their talents and influence to this work; and their labour has not been in vain in the Lord. The Christians at Jerusalem "glorified God in" St. Paul; and we ought to follow their example with respect to the men whom he now qualifies to explain, enforce, and defend his truth, and especially those in the benefits of whose ministry we ourselves participate.

It is not an ordinary degree of gratitude that will suffice in this case. The benefits to be acknowledged are incalculably numerous, and momentous beyond all thought. Multitudes of people have been saved from sin and wrath. In several instances the elder branches of our families, our revered fathers and mothers, as well as we ourselves, have been of the number; and it will be well for us individually to inquire, in the fear and in the presence of God, what, in all probability, would have been our situation, had it not been for that teaching by which we were turned from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" as well as for the discipline under which we have been placed, and the spiritual helps with which we have been favoured, as members of the Wesleyan society. That we might have been converted and saved by other means is true; but it is equally true that we were not. God, in the wise dispensations of his providence and grace, otherwise determined; and for the means by which he was pleased to bring us to himself, our grateful offerings are justly due. "We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works which he did in their days, and in the old time before them."

We ourselves have witnessed the same "works" in our own families and neighbourhoods, and have realized his operations in our own hearts. On the occasion, then, of the happy centenary which we are about to celebrate, while families and individuals shed tears of gratitude before the Lord, and present their thanksgivings to him "apart," let there be also in every place "a holy convocation to the Lord." Let "young men and maidens, old men and children, enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." Let worldly business for the day be suspended, and nothing be thought of nor talked about but God, and his works of mercy. Let no heart remain unaffected, but every breast heave with holy emotion; and the voices of the assembled worshippers be lifted up like the noise of many waters. "Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee." Let self be everywhere annihilated, "and the Lord alone exalted."

"Jesus, the Conqueror, reigns,
In glorious strength array'd,
His kingdom over all maintains,
And bids the earth be glad:
Ye sons of men, rejoice
In Jesus' mighty love;
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,
To Him who rules above.

Extol his kingly power;
Kiss th' exalted Son,
Who died, and lives to die no more,
High on his Father's throne:
Our advocate with God,
He undertakes our cause,
And spreads through all the earth abroad
The victory of his cross."

It is earnestly to be hoped that nothing of unhallowed exclusiveness, or bigotry, will be indulged on this joyful

occasion. Myriads of people in the Established Church of this country, and among the various classes of evangelical dissenters, as well as in other lands, who "follow not with us," are nevertheless partakers with us of like "precious faith" as that by which we are saved from sin; and it is a part of our Christianity to cherish a spirit of universal love, and to hold communion with the true Church of God, especially by prayer for them, and thanksgivings on their account. Ill would it become the spiritual children of John and Charles Wesley, two as truly catholic men as ever existed, to raise the ungodly and fanatical cry, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!" to the exclusion of the other members of the great Christian family, in the midst of whom our Saviour dwells and walks. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." November 4th, 1744, when the Wesleyans, Moravians, and Calvinistic Methodists had become so many distinct bodies, they held a "general love-feast" at the Tabernacle in London, when they unitedly sung the following "Confession of Faith," composed unquestionably by Mr. Charles Wesley.* It is a fine specimen of his charity and sanctified genius, and will not be at all inappropriate to the centenary services, especially where other classes of Christians choose to unite with us.

"O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth," Isa. xxv, 1.

"Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk

* It was published at the time in the form of a handbill.

and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I sware," Deut. xxxi, 19–21.

"THE doctrine of our dying Lord,
The faith he on Mount Calvary seal'd,
We sign; and every steadfast word
Within his testament reveal'd
We firm believe; and curse we they*
Who add thereto, or take away.

And now before this awful crowd
Of brethren militant on earth!
Before the firstborn church of God!
We hearty own the second birth:
We constantly consent to this,—
Who hath not Christ is none of his.

Also to blood we this maintain,
That none are righteous, no, not one,
But those for whom the Lamb was slain,
Who 're justified by faith alone:
And whoso in his name believes
Himself and all Christ hath receives.

Our works and merits we disclaim,
We trample on our righteousness;
Our holiest actions we condemn,
As dung and dross; and this confess,
They are but sand; who builds thereon
Denies and slights the Corner Stone.

No other doctrine dare we hear,
But Christ alone our Saviour is;

* Probably a misprint for "cursed be they."

To all besides we stop our ear,
And shun as dangerous heresies:
This truth to death we will proclaim,—
There is no Saviour but the Lamb!

He is the only Lord and God!
The fulness of the Three in One!
His name, death, righteousness, and blood
Shall be our glory, this alone:
His Godhead and his death shall be
Our song to all eternity.

On him we venture all we have,
Our bodies, souls, and spirits too;
None will we ask besides to save,
Naught but the Saviour will we know:
This we subscribe with heart and hand,
Resolved through grace by this to stand.

This now, with heaven's resplendent host,
We echo through the church's bounds;
And 'midst the heathen make our boast
Of our Redeemer's blood and wounds:
And loud like many waters join
To shout the Lamb, the Man Divine!

By this our mark will we be known
In heaven, and in the earth abroad,—
That every doctrine we disown,
And every faith, and every god;
But Christ Immanuel, and that faith
Which apprehends his blood and death."

It is recommended that the poor members of the Methodist societies should, on this festive occasion, receive of the bounty of the more affluent; and that the same favour should be extended to Sunday scholars, and other children belonging to our schools. Thus Ezra directed the Jews, when they rejoiced at the reading of the law, to "send portions unto them for whom nothing was prepared," as an expression of thanksgiving to God. When these intelligent children inquire, "What mean ye by this

service?" let their teachers and parents tell them, that one hundred years ago, when ignorance and sin overspread this land, it pleased God to raise up a small number of good and faithful men, who went through the country, warning the people, and calling them to repentance; that thousands took the warning; that, as the consequence of the revival of religion which thus began, England is now filled with Bibles, and Sunday schools, and places of worship; that multitudes of people have died in the Lord, and gone to heaven, since this work was commenced; and that, on the other side of the world, where missionaries are labouring, children are assembled in schools by thousands, and old people, with spectacles, are learning to read the Scriptures. Thus let these "little ones" be invited to join in the hymn of praise, and cry hosanna to him who is at once David's Son and David's Lord.

The truest respect that can be shown to the memory of the Wesleys is to imitate their piety and zeal, and thus to follow them as they followed Christ. While celebrating the intended centenary, we shall be unavoidably led to think of the manner in which they preached, and prayed, and strove to save souls from death, and of the motives and feelings by which they were actuated in their self-denying and exhausting labours; and happy will it be if we should catch the same spirit. And indeed why should we not? They were made what they were by the anointing of the Holy One which was upon them; and the same prayer of faith will bring upon us an unction equally rich and sanctifying. The present times are somewhat different from those in which these men of God lived: but the duties of both are substantially the same; and there never was a period when there was a greater need of that plain, faithful, and rousing ministry, of which the Wesleys set the example, than there is at this day.

True evangelical preaching is not to be attained by a superficial acquaintance with the mere elements of divine truth, nor does it consist in the endless repetition of favourite phrases; but in a sound and faithful exposition of God's own word, and an application of it to the understandings and hearts of the people. Greatly is this wanted. Mammon is still the god of a large proportion of our men of business. It cannot, perhaps, be said that a godless philosophy is a leading characteristic of our literary and scientific men; but in a majority of cases philosophy is separated from revealed truth. Never was so much attention paid to "natural theology;" but some of the men who make the greatest noise on this subject, by their silence concerning the Bible, which contains the principles of all that is really valuable in their speculations, too strongly intimate that they have no faith in that holy and inspired book. Mighty efforts are now made, especially by means of the press, to circulate what is called "useful knowledge;" but in the publications which are sent forth avowedly for this purpose, the doctrine of "Christ crucified" is not found. This is a sufficiently obvious intimation that there is, in the estimation of the parties concerned, no real "use" in this "knowledge," even though St. Paul prized it above every other, and preached it to both Jew and Gentile, as the most important of all acquirements.

In the manufacturing districts, and some of the large provincial towns, infidelity, in a form more malignant and diabolical than it ever previously assumed in England, is making rapid progress. Every effort is tried, not only to alienate the popular mind from all faith in the revelation which God has made, but to establish principles subversive of all morality, and of all domestic and social order. The rights of property, and the perpetuity of the marriage relation, are peremptorily denied, and the worst passions of our fallen nature are freed from all effectual restraint,

by a denial of the moral government of God. Presumptuous and bad men propose to introduce a new order of society without religion, without morality, without God. In many places they are labouring with all their might to corrupt the children and youth of our land, by instilling into their minds the worst principles, and by urging them to the actual perpetration of the foulest deeds.

The attempts which are now made to revive the interests of popery in Great Britain are more strenuous and extended than those of any former period since the Reformation. Romish places of worship, and several of them imposing by the magnificence of their architecture, are rising in almost all parts of the land. Schools are opened, and gratuitous education is offered to Protestant children, for the purpose of training them in the old idolatry and superstition. In some parts of the country, priests are going from house to house, among the peasantry, to bring them back to the Church of Rome. In the first instance, they refuse to converse with the people on the subject of religion at all. They visit them merely as friends, and offer little accommodations to such as may be suffering from affliction. When suspicion is removed, and confidence in some degree gained, the peculiarities of popery are gradually introduced and recommended. Their "coming," as St. Paul expresses it, is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness."

The most dangerous power with which the emissaries of Rome are at present armed, is that which they derive from those misleading publications entitled, "Tracts for the Times," which are sent forth by men who sustain the office of clergymen of the Church of England, but who, in fact, inculcate some of the worst errors of popery. Their doctrine is indeed "another gospel," different in its essential principles from that which is laid down in the New Testament, and expounded in the writings of the reform-

ers, particularly in the homilies of the National Church These "Tracts," with other works of a similar kind, are exerting a most mischievous influence in various directions, by holding up the corrupt and idolatrous Church of Rome to public confidence, as the true medium of ministerial authority; and, what is still worse, by describing the Christian salvation, not as consisting in justification and a new and holy nature, obtained by faith in the perfect sacrifice of Christ, but as an indefinite and mysterious something which is received through the sacraments, administered by men, whether holy or wicked, who have received their appointment in a direct line from the apostles. Almost every Protestant community in Europe, not excepting even the Church of Scotland, these men condemn and stigmatize by opprobrious names, simply because they do not hold diocesan episcopacy as a divine ordinance; while they fawn upon the papal church, as their dear and beloved "sister," and the "holy home" of the Lord Jesus; though the Scriptures declare her to be "the mother of harlots and abominations," whose skirts are steeped in "the blood of the saints." Upon their principles of "apostolical succession," the words of our Lord, "By their fruits ye shall know them," applied to false teachers, are not true. Teachers of religion, it seems, are not now to be judged of by their "fruits," but by the hands that have been laid upon them. Their knowledge, their sanctity, the effects of their ministrations, are of little or no account; for the Romish prelates, many of whom were monsters of superstition, ungodliness, and cruelty, we are told, were true ministers of the Lord Jesus, and possessed the exclusive power of conveying the ministerial character. But upon these principles, what becomes of "the truth," which God is pleased to employ as the instrument of human salvation? According to the New Testament, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word

of God," Rom. x, 17; men are regenerated, sanctified, and built up in faith and love, by means of "the truth," faithfully delivered in his name; (James i, 18; 1 Peter i, 23; Ephes. iv, 11, 12;) whereas these men, in effect, teach that the true regeneration is that of baptism, and that mankind are savingly united to Christ by the sacramental bread and wine, invested with supernatural efficacy to this end by the act of priestly consecration.

These are not matters of mere opinion. They affect the very substance of Christianity. The man who teaches people that they are regenerated, and are therefore the children of God; that they are one with Christ, and Christ one with them, because they have been baptized, belong to "the church," and receive the holy eucharist, while at the same time they are manifestly living in impenitence, unbelief, and sin, misleads them to their endless ruin. If the doctrine of the men in question be true, the Reformation was a crime, and the best excuse that can be made for the martyrs of Smithfield is, that they were insane. But even this plea will not be allowed them. One of the writers of whom we are speaking, Mr. Froude, himself a young man, has had the audacity to speak in language of bitterness and contempt of even the wisest and best of that noble band of Protestants who, in the dark and horrible reign of Mary, studied, and preached, and wrote, and yielded their bodies to be burned, for the spiritual freedom of Englishmen and of Christendom.

The boast of "apostolical succession," in the absence of true evangelical knowledge, of personal godliness, and of the divine and inward call to the Christian ministry, of which the ordination service of the Church of England speaks, is a vain delusion, if the New Testament is to decide the question. Our blessed Lord, and his evangelists and apostles, acknowledge no man as a true minister and pastor of souls who is destitute of the piety and gifts

which qualify him to guide mankind in the way to eternal life.

Under present circumstances, there is no room for the slightest relaxation of effort in any section of the Protestant community. It becomes the Wesleyan body especially, in common with all who value the Reformation and the pure doctrines of Christianity, to redouble their exertions to preserve the people of England from the corrupt leaven and secular dominion of papal Rome. This may be done by a more general distribution of the Holy Scriptures; for popery can never succeed among a people that pray, and that study the Bible. It withers to the very roots under the direct rays of revealed truth. By preaching justification by faith, Luther shook the papal throne, and by the same means the Protestant churches of England have been raised into new life. Mr. Wesley did not attempt to guard the people against some particular errors and vices merely, but against these evils in every form; and he secured this by instrumentally making them Christians. He declared to them the entire sinfulness of their nature, the fearful amount of their guilt, and their continual exposure to the miseries of hell. Having succeeded in convincing them of sin, and in bringing them to repentance, he directed them to Christ as their Saviour, and encouraged them to believe in him with the heart unto righteousness. Thus believing, the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto them. They were made both happy and holy; and while they held fast their confidence, it was in vain that the abetters of error tried to perplex them, by saying, "Lo, Christ is here!" or, "Lo, Christ is there!" They felt him to be within them, the hope of glory; and hence arose their stability.

With nothing short of this should we ever be contented. This will preserve the people effectually against the sorceries of Rome, come from what quarter they may; and,

above all, it will prepare them to die in peace, and to enter into heaven.

The centenary will afford a suitable opportunity for the entire body of Wesleyan Methodists, both ministers and societies, to bind themselves afresh to God and to one another, in the steadfast purpose that they will more earnestly than ever aspire to the full possession of the mind that was in Christ, and labour to bring all around them into the same state of purity and spiritual enjoyment. Mr. Wesley declared himself to be sick of opinions, of idle controversies, and of the strife of words. He loathed this frothy food, and called for Christian godliness in its life and power. Neither with respect to himself, nor those that heard him, would he be satisfied with any thing less than the holy, happy love of God and man, springing from a sense of God's mercy in Christ, and expressing itself in all piety, righteousness, benevolence, and truth. Those who live without this, fall short of the great end for which they were created and redeemed, and will through everlasting ages lament their sin and folly. "Let the dead bury their dead: go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The conversion of men to Christ must be the one object of our ministry, of our plans of education, of our missionary exertions, and, indeed, of all our proceedings.

To strengthen the various institutions of Wesleyan Methodism, and thus render the efforts of the connection to spread true religion, both at home and abroad, still more extended and effective, it is intended to connect the devotional acts of the centenary with pecuniary contributions; the objects of which have been already published, and will be found in the appendix to this volume. The more wealthy of our people throughout the land have enrolled their names, and specified the amount of their intended donations. Such a display of Christian liberality was never before witnessed in the Wesleyan body. The large-

ness of the sums has indeed excited general observation. The less wealthy of our societies and congregations, and even the poor, must also have an opportunity of showing their good will to the cause; and it may be hoped that the aggregate will be worthy of the occasion,—a becoming expression of gratitude for benefits already received, and of zeal for the extension of the same benefits to the ends of the earth.

The largest amount of property ever given at one time, for strictly religious purposes, was, perhaps, that which King David, and the elders of the Israelitish tribes, presented toward the erection of the temple. The spirit by which the whole assembly was actuated was every way exemplary. There was no vain boasting there. No one said, "See what Judaism can do!" Every one felt that what he possessed had been first received from God; and that it was an act of infinite condescension in Him to accept the offering of their hands. While they were therefore filled with sacred joy, they presented their gold, and silver, and precious stones, with self-abasement and holy reverence. "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we

should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name cometh of thy hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart, I have willingly offered all these things: and now I have seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee. And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD and the king," 1 Chron. xxix, 9–20.

APPENDIX.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CELEBRATING THE CENTENARY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM.

THE following are the resolutions of the late conference on this subject, extracted from the minutes, pp. 115–119 :—

"Q. What does the conference determine on the subject of the proposed CENTENARY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM?

"A. The committee, appointed by the last conference to consider this subject, reported that, in pursuance of that appointment, they have held three meetings, which were numerously attended both by ministers, and by other gentlemen from other parts of the kingdom; and that, after reading various letters and maturely considering and comparing the suggestions therein contained, as well as the opinions of several highly influential and judicious friends who addressed the meetings, they *unanimously* adopted the following resolutions, as expressing their views and wishes on this interesting question :—

"'I. That this committee cordially approves of the proposed celebration in the ensuing year (1839) of the centenary of the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, under the providential instrumentality of the ever-to-be-revered and venerated JOHN WESLEY.

"'II. That the primary object of the said celebration should be the *religious* and *devotional* improvement of the centenary, by such public services in our chapels as the conference may judge it proper to appoint or to recommend.

"'III. That, in connection with this primary object, it is deemed right and expedient by this committee, that there should be a *general pecuniary contribution*, by means both of private donations and public collections, through all our congregations and societies, at home and abroad;—such contributions being intended as a practical thank-offering to Almighty God, for the personal and public benefits, derived by his blessing from the labours of Mr. Wesley and of his coadjutors and successors, during the last hundred years, and from the direct and indirect influences of Wesleyan Methodism, not merely on our own religious community, but also on the Christian Church at large, and on the spiritual interests of the world.

"'IV. That, after a full consideration, it is the decided opinion of the committee that the connectional fund, to be raised on the occasion of the centenary, should be applied, *in the first place*, in the erection of suitable premises for the accommodation of students to be hereafter received into the *Wesleyan Theological Institution*, (whether such students be designed for home or for missionary service,) on an enlarged scale, adapted to the increasing demands of the connection for the benefit of its rising ministry; and, *in the second place*, in assisting to provide commodious premises in London for the use of the *Wesleyan Missionary Society*, adequate to the greatly augmented and augmenting extent of its multifarious and important business.

"'V. That this committee further recommend that our friends be affectionately advised to make some arrangements, by private and *local* efforts, in each circuit, respectively, for enabling the *children* of our Sunday and other charity schools, and also the *poor members* of our societies, to participate in the pleasure and benefit of the intended celebration, on the day, or on one of the days, to be set apart for that purpose; so as to engage their pious and

hearty concurrence in the thanksgivings, congratulations, and prayers of this great occasion;—the specific plan for the attainment of this object, for the distribution of any local fund which may be raised for the poor members, being left entirely to the discretion of the preachers and friends in every circuit which shall adopt this suggestion, according to their own views of what will be most convenient in each particular case, and most in accordance with the general religious services which may be hereafter appointed for the connection at large.

"'VI. That this committee earnestly recommends to the immediate consideration of the connection the case of our *worn-out* ministers, and that of the widows of our deceased ministers. The committee respectfully suggest the propriety and necessity of some farther provision for their support upon the principle of the children's fund; and would be particularly gratified, if such an arrangement could be effected, and provision made, for its future practical operation, during the coming centenary year; believing that it would be, in connection with other modes of celebrating that occasion, an eminently fitting and beneficial testimonial of the gratitude of the connection to those of its ministers who are no longer capable of regular and constant labours, and of its pious care for the widows of those preachers who are gone to their reward.'

"On receiving this report of the committee the conference unanimously resolved,—

"I. That the conference gratefully approves of the resolutions of the centenary committee as now reported; and cordially adopts them, in substance, as its own.

"II. That a day of special and united supplication for the blessing of God upon the intended centenary services, and for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon ourselves and our people during the coming year, shall be appointed by the president;—such day to be fixed for as early a

period in January, 1839, as he may judge most convenient, and duly announced by him in the Methodist Magazine, and otherwise, according to his discretion.

"III. That the official discourse, usually delivered before the conference by the preacher who has just retired from the presidency, shall be considered, at the next conference in 1839, as the *Centenary Sermon;* and that the Rev. Thomas Jackson, now our president, *then* the ex-president, be accordingly appointed to discharge that duty.

"IV. That our president is also requested to prepare and publish, as early as possible, a brief but comprehen sive work on the subject of the centenary; including, with succinct notices of the origin, progress, and present state of Wesleyan Methodism, and of the leading facts in the life and history of the reverend founder of our societies, such remarks as may assist our friends in the devout improvement of the occasion.

"V. That one day be set apart during the session of the conference in July, 1839, to be employed in suitable religious services, by the preachers and friends who may then be in attendance at Liverpool.

"VI. That, in all other places, the month of October, 1839, is deemed the most suitable period for the centenary services; and that arrangements shall accordingly be made for such services in every chapel, on such day or days of that month as may be found most convenient. The school-collection, usually made in October, shall for that one year be made in September; and it is earnestly requested that no collection for ordinary local purposes shall be made during that month.

"VII. That the president is authorized to nominate and invite a select committee of preachers and laymen, from different parts of the connection, to meet himself and our secretary at Manchester, in October, 1838, or as soon

afterward as may be convenient, for the purpose of carrying into effect the resolutions of the former centenary committee who met at Bristol, as above recorded;—of filling up the outline therein sketched;—of considering such other suggestions, in accordance with the general principle of those resolutions, as may be submitted to them;—and, especially, of appointing local sub-committees in different places, for promoting the general centenary fund, as described in the third and fourth resolutions of the Bristol committee. The committee, at and after their first meeting in Manchester shall have power to add to their number, if they find it expedient; and to adjourn to such times and places as may be deemed requisite.

"VIII. The conference requests the centenary committee just mentioned, to consider and report upon the suggestions which have been offered, and which will be explained to them by the president, as to the expediency of appointing a *special deputation from the conference of* 1839, consisting of its president, ex-president, and secretary, and other members, for the purpose of visiting all the seven cities or towns where conferences are now held, and a few other places of peculiar importance or interest in the history of Wesleyan Methodism, or likely to become conference towns, (such as Oxford, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Hull,) in order to assist the preachers there stationed in the religious services, to be held in October, 1839.

"IX. To the same committee the conference also refers, with unfeigned and respectful gratitude to the gentlemen who originated and supported the sixth resolution of the Bristol committee, the plan therein suggested for the benefit of the worn-out preachers, and widows of deceased preachers; and requests their collective opinion as to the propriety of adopting it, and as to the proper time and means of carrying it into effect, if it be approved,

in a way conformable to our established rules on such subjects."

On the morning of Nov. 7th, 1838, pursuant to these resolutions and directions of the conference, a meeting of ministers and gentlemen, convened by the president from different parts of the United Kingdom, was held in Oldham-street chapel, Manchester, in order to devise a proper plan for the celebration of the approaching Wesleyan centenary:—Present,

The Rev. THOMAS JACKSON, president of the conference, in the chair,—the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary of the conference,—the Rev. Richard Reece, the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, the Rev. George Morley, the Rev. George Marsden, the Rev. Dr. Bunting, the Rev. Joseph Taylor, and the Rev. Edmund Grindrod, ex-presidents of the conference,—and about two hundred and fifty other ministers and gentlemen connected with the Wesleyan Methodist societies and congregations in London, Manchester, Salford, Liverpool, Leeds, Bramley, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield, Bolton, Stockport, Halifax, Bradford, Wolverhampton, West-Bromwich, Macclesfield, Bury, Wakefield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Sunderland, Chester, Rochdale, Oldham, Huddersfield, Sowerby Bridge, Birstal, Hull, York, Whitby, Louth, Haslingden, Dublin, Bandon, and elsewhere.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

I. On the motion of the Rev. Richard Reece, of Hull, seconded by Thomas Percival Bunting, Esq., of Manchester,—That this meeting cordially approves of the proposed celebration, (in 1839,) of the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in the year 1739, under the providential instrumentality of the ever-to-be-revered and venerated JOHN WESLEY; and deeply feels that the PRIMARY object of such celebration should be the *religious* and *devotional* improvement of the centenary by solemn

PUBLIC SERVICES in all our chapels, both at home and in the various stations occupied by our foreign missions.

II. On the motion of James Wood, Esq., of Manchester, seconded by Thomas Farmer, Esq., of London,—That this meeting most cordially concurs in the opinion that, in connection with this primary object, it is eminently right and expedient that there should be a *general pecuniary contribution*, by means both of individual and family donations, and of public collections, through all our societies and congregations at home and abroad;—such contributions being intended as a practical THANK-OFFERING TO ALMIGHTY GOD for the personal, domestic, and public benefits derived, by his blessing, from the labours of Mr. WESLEY, and of his coadjutors and successors, during the last hundred years, and from the direct and indirect influences of the various ministrations and agencies of Wesleyan Methodism, not merely on our own religious community, but also on the Christian Church at large, and on the spiritual interests of the world.

III. On the motion of T. C. Gibson, Esq., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, seconded by Francis Riggall, Esq., of Louth, —That this meeting fully and heartily concurs in the decided judgment of the Bristol Committee, as afterward unanimously sanctioned by the conference, that the connectional fund, to be raised on the occasion of the centenary, should be applied,—

1. *In the first place*,—To the erection and preparation of suitable premises for the accommodation of those students who, after satisfactory evidence obtained by the conference as heretofore, of their sound conversion to God, their solid piety, and their divine call to the Christian ministry, shall be received into the *Wesleyan Theological Institution*, whether such students be designed for home or for missionary service:—

2. *In the second place*,—To the provision of commodious

premises in London for the use of the *Wesleyan Missionary Society*, adequate to the greatly augmented and augmenting extent of its multifarious and important business.

With respect to the *first*, this meeting is deeply convinced, that to afford every possible facility for the improvement of our RISING MINISTRY is not only in itself an object of first-rate importance, but also one of an *eminently connectional* nature, interesting alike to *all classes* of our people, and beneficial to the cause of God, as carried on by our section of the Christian Church, *in every part of the world*, where we have a place; and therefore feels that the time is now fully come when we ought to prepare premises for this purpose on a greatly *extended* scale, adapted to the increasing demands of the connection in this department, and such as will, at the same time, be *monumental* in their character, by presenting a visible and enduring testimonial, in connection with the present centenary occasion, of our gratitude to God for "his good hand upon us for good," and for his mercies toward our fathers and ourselves. And with respect to the provision of suitable premises in London, for the business of the *Wesleyan Missionary Society*, that appropriation, also, is recommended to the approval of this meeting, not only by its utility and necessity, but, additionally, by its *monumental* and its strictly *connectional* character.

IV. On the motion of the Rev. Dr. Bunting, of London, seconded by Thomas Beaumont, Esq., of Bradford,—That this meeting, while fully concurring in the urgent and *pre-eminent* claims of the two objects specified in the preceding resolution, is, at the same time, satisfied of the duty and disposition of the members and friends of our connection to raise, on this special and extraordinary occasion, (*which to them can never again occur*,) a much larger sum, by way of devout thank-offering, than that which those objects alone will require; and pledges itself, individually and

collectively, to the most zealous exertions for that purpose; —being assured that all classes of our friends—male and female, at home and abroad, the middle and poorer classes as well as the affluent, the children and youth of our societies and congregations, as well as those of mature age—will account it a privilege to contribute their proper share, according to their several means.

V. On the motion of George R. Chappell, Esq., of Manchester, seconded by Thomas Walker, Esq., of Stockton-upon-Tees,—That under the influence of this expectation and pledge, this meeting, after much inquiry and careful deliberation as to the other *connectional* objects to which farther sums may be best appropriated, unanimously adopts the following conclusions:—

1. That the sum of *eighty thousand pounds* is considered as the *very lowest* which must be raised, by the universal effort now contemplated, for the centenary fund.

2. That, after a liberal reserve for the purposes of the Theological Institution, and for the new mission-house, &c., as before stated, the remainder of the said sum of £80,000 should be employed as follows:—

(1.) In providing a WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SHIP, for the purpose of forwarding missionaries and missionary stores, as may from time to time be found necessary and expedient, from New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land to our mission stations in New-Zealand, in the Friendly Islands, in the Fejee Islands, and in other Polynesian groups;—such a ship being exceedingly wanted, both for the comfort of the missionaries labouring in those islands, and for the general advantage and security of the missions themselves.

(2.) In finally liquidating a building-debt of about five thousand pounds, yet remaining on the premises of our two connectional schools at Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove;—thus liberating, for the use of the Methodist

Preachers' Annuity Society, a considerable sum now *annually* payable for interest on that debt, and for its gradual reduction, and restoring such sum at once to its original and proper use, as part of the income applicable to the support of preachers compelled, through age or infirmity, to retire from their regular labours in the ministry, and of the widows of our deceased ministers and pastors. To this deeply interesting and affecting subject, (the better support of aged or infirm ministers, and of preachers' widows,) this meeting, in sympathy, it believes, with the feelings and wishes of all our friends who have thought seriously upon it, and to whose views it thus gives expression, would have felt it *imperative* to give a decided prominence in this part of its proceedings, if it had not ascertained that farther and much more adequate means than those which the centenary fund could furnish for accomplishing an object so just and necessary, and so dear to the hearts of our people, can be secured by certain *permanent* arrangements for the regular annual increase of the *Auxiliary Preachers' Fund*, which will be recommended in two subsequent resolutions. (See resolutions 19 and 20.)

(3.) In placing at the disposal of the *Chapel Loan Fund* Committee a considerable sum, sufficient to enable it to continue, without material interruption, its most beneficial and important operations; (which must be otherwise for a while wholly suspended, owing to the entire exhaustion of its *present* resources;) and thus to relieve many cases of distressed trustees and overburdened chapels from the pressure of debt and difficulty;—and also to enable that committee to accelerate, by judicious arrangements, the period at which the interest, and eventually the principal, of the loans already so usefully expended, will be fully discharged; so that the annual income of the regular *chapel fund* may become more speedily available. In this

resolution this meeting anticipates the grateful approbation of the whole respected body of the chapel trustees, and bespeaks with confidence their special exertions on behalf of the centenary fund, in their several localities.

N. B. The five appropriations, specified in the *third* and *fifth* resolutions, namely,—those for the theological institution, the missionary premises and other specialities, the Polynesian missionary ship, the school-building debt, and the chapel-loan fund, (and a small sum for incidental expenses connected with the centenary fund itself,) will require that *at least* the *minimum* of £80,000, above mentioned, should be provided on the present occasion.

VI. On the motion of John Burton, Esq., of Rhodes-house, near Manchester, seconded by W. G. Scarth, Esq., of Leeds,—That it is the earnest hope and expectation of this meeting, that the *minimum* of £80,000, assumed in the preceding resolution, may ultimately be very considerably exceeded by the pious feeling and liberality of our united ministers and people; and that whatever *surplus* beyond that *minimum* shall actually be realized, shall be hereafter devoted to some one or more of the general purposes and objects which are recognised in the preceding resolutions, under the direction of a committee to be appointed from among the principal subscribers, in such proportions as the claims and necessities of each particular object shall seem at the time to require.

VII. On the motion of Thomas Farmer, Esq., of London, seconded by Samuel Stocks, Esq., of Wakefield,—That the subscriptions be now commenced; and that James Wood, Esq., of Manchester, be appointed the *General Treasurer of the Wesleyan Centenary Fund.*

VIII. On the motion of the Rev. John Scott, of London, seconded by the Rev. W. M. Bunting, of Manchester, —That, in order to meet the wishes and convenience of some classes of subscribers, the donations of those who

desire it shall become due by instalments as follows, namely,

First Instalment,—In the week immediately preceding the conference of July, 1839.

Second ditto,—In the week preceding the conference of July, 1840.

Third ditto,—In the week preceding the conference of July, 1841:—

And that the subscribers be respectfully requested to signify to the general treasurer, in a form to be hereafter prepared and duly circulated among them for that purpose, their intentions, either to pay their donations in one sum, at an early period—or to pay them by two or three instalments, beginning in July, 1839, and ending in July, 1841, as they may severally prefer.

IX. On motion of the Rev. Joseph Taylor, of Manchester, seconded by James Musgrave, Esq., of Leeds,—That a *General Centenary Sub-Committee* be appointed, who shall meet from time to time in Manchester, for the purpose of promoting the contribution which it has now been resolved to raise; and of taking such measures as may best engage the prompt, zealous, and efficient co-operation of all our preachers, trustees, class-leaders, and people, in every circuit in Great Britain and Ireland, for the attainment of this great and common object.

X. On the motion of Robert Campion, Esq., of Whitby, seconded by the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, of Bristol,—That the following ministers and gentlemen, of Manchester and Liverpool, and their vicinity, do constitute the said committee; namely, James Wood, Esq., the treasurer; the Rev. Messrs Taylor, Rigg, Slater, West, Pattisson, Smith, W. M. Bunting, Clough, Wilson, Felvus, Steward, Lawton, Heaton, Thompson, Meek, M'Kitrick, Anderson, Squance, Stead, Horton, and Tindall;—Messrs. W. Allen, Adam Bealey, John Burton, J. D. Burton, Braik, Thomas

Percival Bunting, Chappell, John Chubb, John Fernley, Fildes, Garstang, Henson, W. F. Johnson, Thomas Jackson, John Lomas, Mayson, John Marsden, G. B. Marsden, Makinson, Rothwell, W. Read, Rowell, Robert Townend, Thomas Townend, Peter Wood, M. D., Joshua Westhead, Edward Westhead, and John Westhead, all of Manchester; M. Ashton, T. Crook, Dean, George Heald, Kaye, Vernon, and Sands, of Liverpool; and James Heald, Marshall, and Dr. Turner, of Stockport;—with power to add to their number.

XI. On the motion of Thomas Crook, Esq., of Liverpool, seconded by the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, of Bristol,—That the Rev. F. A. West, Mr. John Lomas, Mr. T. P. Bunting, Mr. John Westhead, and Mr. John D. Burton, all of Manchester, be appointed to act as secretaries to the General Sub-Committee.

XII. On the motion of Thomas Sands, Esq., of Liverpool, seconded by John Howard, Esq., of Leeds,—That this meeting earnestly recommends the immediate appointment of local sub-committees in every circuit of Great Britain and Ireland, to co-operate with the General Sub-Committee in promoting the centenary contributions, and also the appointment, by such sub-committees, of a Local Sub-Treasurer in every circuit.

XIII. On the motion of Mr. Thomas Stanley, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, seconded by G. R. Chappell, Esq., of Manchester,—That it is earnestly recommended that one or more public meetings of friends who approve of the objects and plan of the centenary fund shall be held in every circuit, as early in 1839 as can be made convenient, for the purpose of obtaining donations in each distinct locality.

XIV. On the motion of Thomas Farmer, Esq., seconded by the Rev. John Mason, of London,—That the valuable help of the ladies of our societies and congregations shall

be most respectfully solicited, by the formation, in each circuit, of a Ladies' Committee, or otherwise; first, for the purpose of promoting the private and family donations to the general fund,—and, secondly, for the purpose of carrying into effect, at the proper time, the recommendations contained in the fifth resolution of the Bristol Committee, (see Minutes of 1838, p. 116,) that *local* arrangements should be made for enabling the *children* of our Sunday and day schools, and the *poor* members of our societies, to participate in the pleasure and benefit of the intended celebration, on the day, or on one of the days, to be set apart for that end, but on such a plan as will not interfere with the public religious services of the occasion.

XV. On the motion of Peter Rothwell, Esq., of Bolton, seconded by Charles Chubb, Esq., of London,—That the Missionary Committee and secretaries be respectfully requested to adopt early and suitable measures for obtaining the concurrence of the societies and congregations at our foreign stations in the religious celebration of the centenary, and in the contribution which is to accompany that celebration.

XVI. On the motion of the Rev. Robert Newton, of Leeds, seconded by the Rev. George Marsden, of Sheffield, —That this meeting rejoices to learn from the much respected president of the conference, that the volume which he is preparing, in compliance with the fourth resolution of the late Bristol Conference, on the occasion of the centenary, (see Minutes of 1838, p. 118,) is in a state of forwardness; and recommends that it should be published as speedily as practicable, and that a *cheap* edition, as little abridged as possible, should be printed, for sale or distribution among our poorer members, and in our Sunday and day schools.

XVII. On the motion of John Marsden, Esq., of Manchester, seconded by Thomas Bagnall, Esq., of Wolver-

hampton,—That, with respect to the *time* of celebration, this meeting entirely approves of the third, fifth, and sixth resolutions of the late conference; (see Minutes, 1838, p. 118;) which are in substance as follows:—"That the official discourse, to be delivered before the conference at Liverpool in 1839, by the Rev. Thomas Jackson, shall be considered as *The Centenary Sermon*:—

"That one day be set apart during the session of the conference, in 1839, to be employed in suitable religious services:—

"That in all other places, the *month of October*, 1839, is deemed the most suitable period for the centenary services; and that, in consideration of the universal congregational collections to be then made for the centenary fund, no collection for ordinary local purposes should be made in that month and the school collections, usually made in October, should, for that one year, be made in September."

This meeting further most respectfully recommends that the conference should direct that on *Friday the twenty-fifth day of October*, 1839, meetings shall be held in every chapel, early in the morning, and also in the evening, for united prayer and thanksgiving;—that, where it can be done with convenience, the *same* day should be selected for public discourses and worship in our congregations, at the hours of their usual assembly in the forenoon and evening of the Lord's day;—and that, even where local circumstances render it necessary to select some other day of the month for *general* worship, *that* day (October 25th) should nevertheless be *uniformly* adopted for the purposes of public devotion at some early hour of the morning, and also in the evening, as before specified.

XVIII. On the motion of the Rev. W. Atherton, of London, seconded by Mr. Ralph Wilson, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne,—That this meeting approves of the plan referred to its consideration in the eighth resolution of the late con

ference, (see Minutes of 1838, p. 119,) namely, the appointment of *special deputations* from the conference, consisting of its official and other members, to visit the ten places mentioned in that resolution, at the time of the centenary, in order to assist the preachers there stationed in the religious services of the occasion; but respectfully recommends that the cities of Dublin and Edinburgh should, if possible, be added to the list.

XIX. On motion of G. B. Thorneycroft, Esq., of Wolverhampton, seconded by Mr. Alexander Braik, of Manchester, —That this meeting now rejoices to turn its attention again from the proposed centenary *fund*, to another subject, which, in common with the members of several recent quarterly meetings of circuits, and with numerous other friends, it deems to be of the greatest importance; namely, the justice and necessity of making a *regular* and *permanent* provision for the better support of our ministers, when placed through age or infirmity on the supernumerary list, and also for the widows of deceased preachers. The deliberations of the meeting having been strongly directed to this object from an early period of its sittings by the reference made to it in the sixth resolution of the Bristol Committee, and also by the conference itself, (see Minutes of 1838, pp. 118 and 119,) and by the addresses of many of its own very judicious and influential members, it is *unanimously* agreed that an arrangement for its immediate and permanent accomplishment should be made at the very next conference, by an adequate increase of the *Auxiliary Preachers' Fund*, on the fair and equitable principle already so beneficially exemplified in respect to the Children's Fund; and the meeting most earnestly recommends that the preachers and circuit-stewards should express, at the next district meetings, in May, 1839, according to our established rule in such cases, their cheerful approbation of such an arrangement, and their readiness

to carry it into effect forthwith in their respective circuits. This meeting feels, with the Bristol Committee, that the introduction of this plan *during the centenary year* "would be, in conjunction with other modes of celebration, an eminently fitting and beneficial testimonial of the gratitude of the connection to those of its ministers who are no longer capable of constant labours, and of its pious care for the widows of those preachers who are gone to their reward."

XX. On the motion of Joshua Swallow, Esq., of Wakefield, seconded by Joseph Agar, Esq., of York,—That for the purpose of completing the outline of the plan to which the last resolution refers, and of placing it before the several district-meetings, accompanied by such information as will evince both its justice and its easy practicability, by means of a small but aggregate and united contribution to be annually furnished from all the circuits, and as will, this meeting confidently hopes, induce its immediate and unanimous recommendation to the conference of 1839,—the following persons be requested to act as a sub-committee, and to meet at Manchester at such early period of the ensuing year, (before the annual meetings of the districts,) as the president shall appoint and announce, namely,

The president and secretary of the conference; the Rev. Messrs. G. Marsden, J. Taylor, Grindrod, Waugh, Naylor, Scott, R. Wood, Mason, Haswell, Pilter, Vevers, Eastwood, Anderson, Rigg, Slater, West, and Dr. Bunting; Messrs. J. Wood, J. Burton, J. Marsden, Braik, Chappell, J. Lomas, T. P. Bunting, and John Westhead, all of Manchester; Scarth, Musgrave, and Howard, all of Leeds; Crook, G. Heald, Sands, and Ashton, all of Liverpool; Heald, of Stockport; Allen, of Macclesfield; Farmer, of London; Suter, of Halifax; Thorneycroft, of Wolverhampton; and Riggall, of Louth.

XXI. On the motion of W. F. Pocock, Esq., of London,

seconded by the Rev. James Blackett, of Whitby,—That the following persons be respectfully requested to meet the treasurers and secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in Liverpool, on some convenient day in the week preceding the ensuing conference, as a sub-committee, for the purpose of considering the best method of providing and managing the Polynesian missionary ship, mentioned in the fifth of the foregoing resolutions: namely, the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Taylor, Lawry, and Horton; and Messrs. Irving, Campion, Sands, Gibson, T. Walker, and G. W. Longridge: with power to add to their number.

XXII. On the motion of Adam Bealey, Esq., of Radcliffe, seconded by the Rev. Thomas Waugh, of Ireland,—That in conformity to the authority confided by the conference to this committee, (Minutes of 1838, p. 118,) to *adjourn* its meetings from Manchester to such times and places as may be deemed requisite, this meeting be, at its close, adjourned to the following times and places, for the purpose of making known and explaining the plans which it has adopted in reference to the centenary, and of obtaining without delay, the general support of our friends in other parts of the connection in aid of the centenary fund, namely,

Liverpool,—Wednesday, November 21st, 1838: for the Liverpool, Macclesfield, North Wales, and the Isle of Man districts.

London,—Friday, December 7th: for the southern and south-eastern districts.

Bristol,—Monday, December 10th: for the west of England and South Wales.

Birmingham,—Wednesday, December 12th: for the contiguous midland districts.

Sheffield,—Friday, December 14th: for the Sheffield and the Nottingham and Derby districts.

Leeds,—Monday, December 17th: for all the West-Riding districts.

Hull,—Wednesday, December 19th: for the Hull, Lincolnshire, York, and Whitby districts.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne,—Friday, December 21st: for all the northern districts and circuits.

Dublin,—Wednesday, February 27th, 1839: for Ireland.

That the president and secretary of the conference, with Dr. Bunting, James Wood, Esq., (the treasurer,) Messrs. Crook, Scarth, J. Heald, Chappell, Walker, Thorneycroft, Suter, Campion, Farmer, Elliott, Riggall, and as many other members of this committee, both ministers and laymen, as conveniently can, be earnestly requested to attend these adjourned meetings:—That our friends at each place be respectfully solicited to make the necessary previous arrangements, and to circulate extensively the president's letter of invitation in their several localities: That farther adjournments of this committee be fixed, if found necessary, at any future meeting, in the course of the year:—And that the final adjournments for business be fixed for Liverpool, in connection with the ensuing conference, on such day as the president may appoint and announce.

XXIII. On the motion of the Rev. Dr. Hannah, seconded by the Rev. Richard Waddy,—That the ministers and friends who have had the privilege of attending this meeting feel it especially incumbent upon them to record their most devout thanksgiving to Almighty God for the extraordinary tokens of his presence and blessing which have mercifully accompanied their several deliberations. Never did they take part in counsels which were more eminently and uniformly distinguished by fraternal confidence, kindness, and unanimity. From the peace and amity which now happily prevail throughout the connection, they adventured to cherish large expectations; but they are constrained, with the deepest gratitude, to acknowledge that their largest expectations have been far exceeded. So

remarkable a visitation from the SPIRIT of all unity and love —signs so unequivocal of a gracious influence from on high—fill them with hope the most cheerful and encouraging. They part from each other in the humble but firm persuasion that this meeting affords a pledge and antepast of diffusive good; that the spirit of which its members have so delightfully partaken will spread itself, with a rich train of blessings, through the whole Methodist body; that the societies, walking more closely than ever "in the fear of the LORD, and in the comfort of the HOLY GHOST," will be abundantly "multiplied;" and that the approaching centenary will obtain a permanent memorial from heaven, —the memorial of a great and extensive revival of pure and primitive Christianity.

XXIV. On the motion of Thomas Farmer, Esq., of London, seconded by William Skinner, Jun., Esq., of Stockton-upon-Tees,—That the most affectionate and cordial thanks of this meeting are justly due, and are hereby tendered, on the part of those members who have come from distant places, to our friends in Manchester and its neighbourhood, for their great hospitality and Christian kindness, and for their exemplary zeal in promoting the important object which has brought us together.

XXV. On the motion of James Wood, Esq., seconded by G. R. Chappell, Esq., both of Manchester,—That the lay members of this committee feel it to be their duty and pleasure, before they separate, to record their sense of the valuable services which have been rendered to the centenary cause by the Rev. Robert Newton, secretary of the conference, and by the other respected ministers, who have attended the meeting, and have afforded to it their highly important assistance.

Signed, on behalf of the meeting,
THOMAS JACKSON,
President of the Conference.

XXVI. It was then finally resolved, on the motion of James Wood, Esq., on behalf of James Heald, Esq., of Stockport, (who had been obliged to leave the meeting,) seconded by the Rev. Dr. Bunting, of London,—That the warmest thanks of this meeting be most respectfully presented to the Rev. Thomas Jackson, president of the conference, for the distinguished ability, affection, and piety with which he has conducted the various business of this most happy and interesting week; and for his very edifying and acceptable communications connected with the history of Mr. Wesley and of Methodism.

Signed, on behalf of the meeting,
ROBERT NEWTON,
Secretary to the Conference.

Manchester, Nov. 9, 1838.

NOTE TO PAGE 52.

When Mr. Wesley obtained "the pearl of great price," the faith of God's elect, he was listening to a passage in Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. It is remarkable that none of Mr. Wesley's biographers should have referred to this document, which is singularly adapted to the state of his mind at that particular period. It proves that Luther was not only a powerful opponent of ecclesiastical abuses, and of those theological errors which the Church of Rome has invented and maintained; but that he was also well acquainted with the work of God in the human heart. The preface in question was published in English during the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and it was probable that it was a reprint of this translation that was read in the meeting which Mr. Wesley describes. This book has long been extremely scarce, so that I have never been able to get possession of a copy; I should otherwise have had great pleasure in laying before the readers of the present volume, the exact words to which the venerated founder of Methodism was listening when the Son of God was revealed in his heart. In the absence of that tract, I have no alternative but to give the passage from Luther in a new translatlon. They occur in the fifth volume of Luther's Works, in folio, A. D. 1554. The small treatise from which they are selected bears the title of *Prefatio Methodica totius Scripturæ in Epistolam ad Romanos.* It was, like many other of Luther's valuable productions, originally written and published in the German language, and translated A. D. 1523, by the famous Justus Jonas, into Latin. Each paragraph, according to the usage of the learned in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, has a distinct heading, descriptive of the subject on which it treats. The following are a few specimens; and they contain that part of the tract which Mr. Wesley mentions, as "describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ."

"THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL.

"Therefore the apostle says, in chap. vii, 'The law is spiritual;' as if he had said, If the law were only carnal and moral doctrine, it might be fulfilled by outward works. For since it is spiritual, that is, as it requires all our spirit and affections, then no one fulfils it with a cheerful heart, and with a certain ardour of mind, and with

entire affection, unless he performs those things which the law commands. But thou obtainest such a new heart, and those ardent and cheerful affections of the heart, not through any strength or merit of thine own, but solely through the operation and afflatus of the Holy Spirit. For he alone renews the heart, and makes a man spiritual; that, thus being spiritual, he may love *spiritualem legem*, the law of the Spirit; and not through fear, or through desire of any advantage, but with a cheerful and free heart, may fulfil it; and may be borne on by *quodam impetu*, a sort of divine impulse, spontaneously and without constraint to do those things which belong to the law. 'The law is spiritual,' must therefore be thus understood: The law is not fulfilled, except with a spirit and heart renewed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, wherever this spirit and renovation of the heart through the Holy Spirit are not, so far is the law from being there fulfilled, that, on the contrary, all the [natural] repugnance to it and hatred of it remain there, although the law of itself 'is holy, and just, and good.'"

"WHAT IS MEANT BY FULFILLING THE LAW.

"But to fulfil the law, is to perform those things commanded in the law, with hilarity, uprightness, and cheerfulness of heart; that is, spontaneously, and of one's free choice, to live to God, and to perform good works, even though the law had no existence. But *non contingit cordibus*, our hearts have not any such hilarity, cheerfulness, favourable inclination of the will, and ardent affection, except through *vivificatorem*, the life-giving Spirit, and his lively impulse and *agitationem*, motion in the heart: as the apostle says in chap. v. But the Spirit is bestowed solely through faith in Jesus Christ. In like manner, at the commencement he has said, faith cometh by hearing the gospel, or the word of God; by which Christ is preached as having died for us, as having been buried, and raised from the dead, as he declares in chap. iii, iv, x. Our entire justification, therefore, is of God; faith and the Spirit are likewise of God, and not of ourselves."

"FAITH ALONE JUSTIFIES.

"Hence also faith alone justifies, and it alone fulfils the law. For faith, through the merits of Christ, obtains the Holy Spirit. This blessed Spirit renews, exhilarates, excites, and inflames the heart, so that it spontaneously performs what the law requires. And then, at length, from the faith thus efficaciously working and living in the

heart, freely *fluunt*, proceed those works which are truly good. The apostle wishes to convey this meaning in the third chapter. For after he had, in that chapter, utterly condemned the works of the law, and might almost seem, by the doctrine of faith, about to destroy and abolish the law, he at once anticipates the objection by asserting, 'We do not destroy the law, but we establish it;' that is, we teach how the law is really fulfilled by believing, or through faith."

"WHAT IS TRUE FAITH?

"But true faith is the work of God in us, by which we are born again and renewed, through God and the Spirit of God, as we are told in John i; and by which the old Adam is slain, and we are completely transformed *per omnia*, in all things; as the apostle declares, 'We are made new creatures in Christ through faith;' *ubi*, in which new creatures the Holy Spirit becomes *vita et gubernatio cordis*, the living and ruling principle of the heart. But faith is an energy in the heart; at once so efficacious, lively, breathing, and powerful, as to be incapable of remaining inactive, but bursts forth into operation. Neither does he who has faith, *moratur*, demur about the question, whether good works have been commanded or not; but even though there were no law, feeling the motions of this living impulse putting forth and exerting itself in his heart, he is spontaneously borne onward to work, and at no time does he cease to perform such actions as are truly pious and Christian. But whosoever from such a living affection of the heart produces no good works, he is still in a state of total unbelief, and is a stranger to faith; as are most of those persons who hold long disputes, and give utterance to much declamation in the schools, about faith and good works, 'neither understanding what they say, nor whereof they affirm.'"

"WHAT FAITH IS.

"Faith, then, is a constant *fiducia*, trust in the mercy of God toward us; a trust living and efficaciously working in the heart; by which we cast ourselves entirely on God, and commit ourselves to him; by which, *certò freti*, having an assured reliance, we feel no hesitation about enduring death a thousand times. And this firm trust in the mercy of God is *tam animosa*, so animating, as to cheer, elevate, and excite the heart, and to transport it with certain most sweet affections toward God; and it animates this heart of the be-

liever in such a manner that, firmly relying on God, he feels no dread in opposing himself *solum*, as a single champion against all creatures. This high and heroical feeling, therefore, *hos ingentes animos*, this noble enlargement of spirit, is injected and effected in the heart by the Spirit of God, who is imparted [to the believer] through faith. And hence we also obtain [the privilege] to be impelled to that which is good, by this vital energy in our hearts. We also obtain such a cheerful *propensionem*, inclination, that freely and spontaneously we are eager and most ready to do, to suffer, and to endure all things in obedience to a Father and God of such great clemency; who, through Christ, has enriched us with such abundant treasures of grace, and has almost overwhelmed us with such transcendent benefits. It is impossible that this efficacious and vital principle of faith can be in any man without continually operating, and producing fruit to God. It is just as impossible for a pile of dry fagots to be set on fire without emitting flames of light. Wherefore use watchfulness, *ibi*, in this quarter, so as not to believe the vain imaginations of thy own mind, and the foolish cogitations and trifles of the sophists. For these men possess neither heart nor brains: they are mere animals of the belly, born only for these solemn banquets of the schools. But do thou pray to God, who by his word has commanded light to shine out of darkness, that he would be pleased to shine into thy heart, and create faith within thee; otherwise thou wilt never believe, though thou shouldest spend a thousand years in studying to fabricate such cogitations about a faith already obtained or to be hereafter acquired."

While the great German reformer thus "described the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ," the English clergyman who had gone to the ends of the earth to convert the heathen, and returned in a penitent state of heart, having there learned that he was not converted himself, tells us, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

It is worthy of remark, that the principles which Mr. Wesley recognised in this most solemn and momentous transaction he steadily maintained till his spirit returned to God. He regarded the natural state of men as a state of guilt and condemnation, and of depravity and helplessness. They are under the sentence of eternal death, and they are at the same time under the power of sin, so as to be unable either to offer to God acceptable worship or acceptable

obedience. They cannot atone for any of their sins, nor can they escape from their evil nature, by any devices that they can form, or any efforts that they can put forth. The salvation which has been merited for them by the death of Christ, and which the gospel reveals, fully meets their case. It comprehends two great blessings, —justification, and sanctification,—by which we understand deliverance from the guilt and from the power of sin. This salvation is obtained by the simple exercise of faith in Christ crucified. Whatever may be the depth of a man's penitential sorrow, the correctness of his moral conduct, the intensity of his desire to please and enjoy God, or the earnestness and importunity of his prayers, he is not accepted and regenerated till he believes in Christ. It is only when he trusts in Christ that forgiveness is sealed upon his conscience, and the sin that dwelleth in him ceases to have the dominion. There is an inseparable connection between these blessings. No man can receive one without the other. Yet in the order of nature justification is first vouchsafed. It is indeed absurd to suppose that the Holy Ghost will so renew us in the spirit of our minds as to make us partakers of the divine nature, while we remain under the curse of God's violated law. But when we are "accepted in the Beloved" there is no "charge" against us; we are as fully justified as if we had never committed a single sin, but had actually fulfilled all righteousness; and hence there is nothing to hinder the communication of the Holy Spirit in all his plenitude of regenerating power. This salvation is matter of personal consciousness. The spirit of adoption is in the believing heart, crying, "Abba, Father;" and permanently happy are the men whom the Son thus makes free by an application of his blood, and the mighty working of the Holy Ghost.

NOTE TO PAGE 62.

Some idea may be formed of the violent opposition which the Wesleys had to encounter as itinerant preachers, from the following narratives, the first selected from the Journal of Mr. John Wesley, and the other from that of Charles.

"Thursday, Oct. 20th, 1743," says Mr. John Wesley, "after preaching to a small, attentive congregation, I rode to Wednesbury. At twelve I preached in a ground near the middle of the town, to a far larger congregation than was expected, on, 'Jesus Christ, the

same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' I believe every one present felt the power of God. And no creature offered to molest us, either going or coming; but the Lord fought for us, and we held our peace.

"I was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, when the cry arose that 'the mob had beset the house.' We prayed that God would disperse them; and it was so; one went this way, and another that, so that, in half an hour, not a man was left. I told our brethren, 'Now is the time for us to go;' but they pressed me exceedingly to stay. So, that I might not offend them, I sat down, though I foresaw what would follow. Before five the mob surrounded the house again, in greater numbers than ever. The cry of one and all was, 'Bring out the minister; we will have the minister.' I desired one to take their captain by the hand, and bring him into the house. After a few sentences interchanged between us, the lion was become a lamb. I desired him to go and bring one or two more of the most angry of his companions. He brought in two, who were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he. I then bade him make way, that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them, I called for a chair, and, standing up, asked, 'What do you want with me?' Some said, 'We want you to go with us to the justice.' I replied, 'That I will with all my heart.' I then spoke a few words, which God applied; so that they cried out with might and main, 'The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence.' I asked, 'Shall we go to the justice to-night, or in the morning?' Most of them cried, 'To-night, to-night;' on which I went before, and two or three hundred followed; the rest returning whence they came.

"The night came on before we had walked a mile, together with heavy rain. However, on we went to Bentley-hall, two miles from Wednesbury. One or two ran before, to tell Mr. Lane they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship. Mr. Lane replied, 'What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go and carry him back again.' By this time the main body came up, and began knocking at the door. A servant told them Mr. Lane was in bed. His son followed, and asked what was the matter. One replied, 'Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day: nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning: and what would your worship advise us to do?' 'To go home,' said Mr. Lane, 'and be quiet.'

"Here they were at a full stop, till one advised to go to Justice

Persehouse, at Walsal. All agreed to this. So we hastened on, and about seven came to his house. But Mr. P—— likewise sent word that he was in bed. Now they were at a stand again; but at last they all thought it the wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convoy me; but we had not gone a hundred yards when the mob of Walsal came pouring in like a flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defence they could; but they were weary as well as outnumbered; so that, in a short time, many being knocked down, the rest ran away, and left me in their hands.

"To attempt speaking was vain; for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea; so they dragged me along till they came to the town, where, seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in, but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stop till they had carried me through the main street, from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made toward it, and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying they would 'pull the house down to the ground.' However, I stood at the door, and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?' Many cried out, 'No, no! knock his brains out; down with him; kill him at once.' Others said, 'Nay, but we will hear him first.' I began asking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?' and continued speaking for above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed; then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, 'Bring him away, bring him away.'

"In the mean time my strength and my voice returned, and I broke out aloud into prayer. And now the man who just before headed the mob, turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' Two or three of his fellows confirmed his words, and got close to me immediately; at the same time the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame, for shame! let him go.' An honest butcher, who was a little farther off, said it was a shame they should do thus; and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left; while those three or four men took me between them, and carried me through them all. But on the bridge the mob rallied again; we therefore went on one side,

over the mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till a little before ten God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands.

"I never saw such a chain of providences before; so many convincing proofs that the hand of God is on every person and thing, overruling all as it seemeth him good.

"The poor woman of Darlaston, who had headed that mob, and sworn that none should touch me, when she saw her followers give way, ran into the thickest of the throng, and knocked down three or four men, one after another; but many assaulting her at once, she was soon overpowered, and had probably been killed in a few minutes, (three men keeping her down, and beating her with all their might,) had not a man called to one of them, 'Hold, Tom, hold!' 'Who is there,' said Tom: 'what! honest Munchin? Nay, then, let her go.' So they held their hand, and let her get up and crawl home as well as she could.

"From the beginning to the end, I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study; but I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind, that, if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket: for myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots.

"The circumstances that follow, I thought, were particularly remarkable:—1. That many endeavoured to throw me down while we were going down hill on a slippery path, to the town; as well judging, that if I was once on the ground, I should hardly rise any more: but I made no stumble at all, nor the least slip, until I was entirely out of their hands. 2. That although many strove to lay hold on my collar or clothes, to pull me down, they could not fasten at all; only one got fast hold of the flap of my waistcoat, which was soon left in his hand; the other flap, in the pocket of which was a bank-note, was torn but half off. 3. That a lusty man, just behind, struck at me several times with a large oaken stick, with which, if he had struck me once on the back part of my head, it would have saved him all further trouble: but every time the blow was turned aside, I know not how; for I could not move to the right hand or left. 4. That another came rushing through the press, and, raising his arm to strike, on a sudden let it drop, and only stroked my head, saying, 'What soft hair he has!' 5. That I stopped exactly at the mayor's door, as if I had known it, (which the mob doubtless thought I did,) and found him standing in the shop, which gave the first

check to the madness of the people. 6. That the very first men whose hearts were turned were the heroes of the town, the captains of the rabble on all occasions, one of them having been a prize-fighter at the bear-garden. 7. That from first to last, I heard none give a reviling word, or call me by any opprobrious name whatever; but the cry of one and all was, 'The Preacher! The Preacher! The Parson! The Minister!' 8. That no creature, at least within my hearing, laid any thing to my charge, either true or false; having in the hurry quite forgot to provide themselves with an accusation of any kind. And, lastly, That they were as utterly at a loss what they should do with me, none proposing any determinate thing, only, 'Away with him; kill him at once.'

"By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago a piece of brick grazed my shoulders. It was a year after that the stone struck me between the eyes. Last month I received one blow, and this evening two; one before we came into the town, and one after we were gone out; but both were as nothing: for though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no more pain from either of the blows than if they had touched me with a straw.

"It ought not to be forgotten, that when the rest of the society made all haste to escape for their lives, four only would not stir, Wm. Sitch, Edward Slater, John Griffiths, and Joan Parks; these kept with me, resolving to live or die together: and none of them received one blow but William Sitch, who held me by the arm from one end of the town to the other. He was then dragged away and knocked down; but he soon rose and got to me again. I afterward asked him what he expected when the mob came upon us. He said, 'To die for Him who had died for us;' and he felt no hurry or fear, but calmly waited till God should require his soul of him.

"I asked J. Parks if she was not afraid when they tore her from me. She said, 'No, no more than I am now; I could trust God for you as well as myself. From the beginning I had a full persuasion that God would deliver you; I knew not how, but I left that to him, and was as sure as if it were already done.' I asked if the report was true, that she had fought for me. She said, 'No; I knew God would fight for his children.' And shall these souls perish at the last?

"When I came back to Francis Ward's, I found many of our brethren waiting upon God. Many also whom I never had seen

before came to rejoice with us; and the next morning, as I rode through the town in my way to Nottingham, every one I met expressed such a cordial affection, that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard.

"I cannot close this head without inserting as great a curiosity in its kind as, I believe, was ever yet seen in England, which had its birth within a very few days of this remarkable occurrence at Walsal.

"'*Staffordshire.*

"'To all high-constables, petty-constables, and other of his Majesty's peace-officers within the said county, and particularly to the constable of Tipton, (near Walsal.)

"'Whereas we, his majesty's justices of the peace for the said county of Stafford, have received information that several disorderly persons, styling themselves *Methodist preachers*, go about raising routs and riots, to the great damage of his Majesty's liege people, and against the peace of our sovereign lord the king:—

"'These are, in his Majesty's name, to command you and every one of you, within your respective districts, to make diligent search after the said Methodist preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us, his said Majesty's justices of the peace, to be examined concerning their unlawful doings.

"'Given under our hands and seals, this day of October, 1743.

"'J. LANE,
"'W. PERSEHOUSE.'

"N. B. The very justices to whose houses I was carried, and who severally refused to see me!"

Having made his escape from the Staffordshire rioters, Mr. Wesley went to Nottingham, where he was met by his brother, who encountered similar treatment in various parts of the country. Charles says in his Journal, "My brother came, delivered out of the mouth of the lions! His clothes were torn to tatters. He looked like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsal, were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours with a full intent to murder him: but his work is not yet finished, or he had been now with the souls under the altar."

From Nottingham Mr. Charles Wesley hastened to Wednesbury, to strengthen and encourage the persecuted society. He found them

assembled, standing fast in one mind and spirit, and in nothing terrified by their adversaries. He preached twice to them, and admitted several new members into the society. He also admitted upon trial, "the young man whose arm had been broken, and Munchin, the late captain of the mob." "He has been constantly under the word," says Mr. Charles Wesley, "since he rescued my brother. I asked him what he thought of him. 'Think of him!' said he, 'that he is a man of God; and God was on his side, when *so many* of us could not kill *one man*.'"

The following scene occurred at Devizes:—

"February 25th, 1747," says Mr. Charles Wesley, was "a day never to be forgotten. At seven o'clock, I walked quietly to Mrs. Philips's, and began preaching a little before the time appointed. For three quarters of an hour, I invited a few listening sinners to Christ. Soon after, Satan's whole army assaulted the house. We sat in a little ground-room, and ordered all the doors to be thrown open. They brought a hand-engine, and began to play into the house. We kept our seats, and they rushed into the passage: just then Mr. Borough, the constable, came, and seizing the spout of the engine carried it off. They swore if he did not deliver it, they would pull down the house. At that time they might have taken us prisoners; we were close to them, and none to interpose; but they hurried out to fetch the larger engine. In the mean time we were advised to send for the mayor; but Mr. Mayor was gone out of town, in the sight of the people, which gave great encouragement to those who were already wrought up to a proper pitch by the curate, and the gentlemen of the town; particularly Mr. Sutton and Mr. Willy, dissenters, the two leading men. Mr. Sutton frequently came out to the mob, to keep up their spirits. He sent word to Mrs. Philips, that if she did not turn that fellow out to the mob, he would send them to drag him out. Mr. Willy passed by again and again, assuring the rioters he would stand by them, and secure them from the law, do what they would."

The rioters "now began playing the larger engine; which broke the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods. We were withdrawn to a small upper room in the back part of the house; seeing no way to escape their violence, as they seemed under the full power of the old murderer. They first laid hold on the man who kept the society-house, dragged him away and threw him into the horse-pond; and it was said, broke his back. We gave ourselves unto prayer, believing the Lord would deliver us; how, or when

we saw not; nor any possible way of escaping; we therefore stood still to see the salvation of God. Every now and then, some or other of our friends would venture to us; but rather weakened our hands, so that we were forced to stop our ears, and look up. Among the rest, the mayor's maid came, and told us her mistress was in tears about me; and begged me to disguise myself in women's clothes, and try to make my escape. Her heart had been turned toward us by the conversion of her son, just on the brink of ruin. God laid his hand on the poor prodigal, and instead of running to sea, he entered the society. The rioters without continued playing their engine, which diverted them for some time; but their number and fierceness still increased; and the gentlemen supplied them with pitchers of ale, as much as they would drink. They were now on the point of breaking in, when Mr. Borough thought of reading the proclamation; he did so at the hazard of his life. In less than the hour, of above a thousand wild beasts, none were left but the guard. Our constable had applied to Mr. Street, the only justice in town, who would not act. We found there was no help in man, which drove us closer to the Lord; and we prayed, with little intermission the whole day.

"Our enemies, at their return, made their main assault at the back door, swearing horribly, they would have me if it cost them their lives. Many seeming accidents concurred to prevent their breaking in. The man of the house came home, and instead of turning me out, as they expected, took part with us, and stemmed the tide for some time. They now got a notion that I had made my escape; and ran down to the inn and played the engine there. They forced the innkeeper to turn out our horses, which he immediately sent to Mr. Clarke's; which drew the rabble and their engine thither. But the resolute old man charged and presented his gun, till they retreated. Upon their revisiting us, we stood in jeopardy every moment. Such threatenings, curses, and blasphemies, I have never heard. They seemed kept out by a continual miracle. I remembered the Roman senators sitting in the forum, when the Gauls broke in upon them; but thought there was a fitter posture for Christians, and told my companion they should take us off our knees. We were kept from all hurry, and discomposure of spirit, by a divine power resting upon us. We prayed and conversed as freely as if we had been in the midst of our brethren; and had great confidence that the Lord would either deliver us from the danger, or in it. In the height of the storm, just when we were falling into the

hands of the drunken enraged multitude, Mr. Minton was so little disturbed that he fell fast asleep.

"They were now close to us on every side, and over our heads untiling the roof. A ruffian cried out, 'Here they are, behind the curtain.' At this time we fully expected their appearance, and retired to the furthermost corner of the room; and I said, THIS IS THE CRISIS. In that moment Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. We heard not a breath without, and wondered what was become of them. The silence lasted for three quarters of an hour, before any one came near us; and we continued in mutual exhortation and prayer, looking for deliverance. I often told my companions, 'Now God is at work for us: he is contriving our escape; he can turn these leopards into lambs; can command the heathen to bring his children on their shoulders, and make our fiercest enemies the instruments of our deliverance.' About three o'clock Mr. Clarke knocked at the door, and brought with him the persecuting constable. He said, 'Sir, if you will promise never to preach here again, the gentleman and I will engage to bring you safe out of town.' My answer was, 'I shall promise no such thing: setting aside my office, I will not give up my birthright as an Englishman, of visiting what place I please of his majesty's dominions.' 'Sir,' said the constable, 'we expect no such promise that you will never come here again; only tell me that it is not your *present* intention, that I may tell the gentlemen, who will secure your quiet departure.' I answered, 'I cannot come again at this time, because I must return to London a week hence. But, *observe*, I make no promise of not preaching here when the door is opened; and do not you say that I do.'

"He went away with this answer, and we betook ourselves to prayer and thanksgiving. We perceived it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes. The hearts of our adversaries were turned. Whether pity for us, or fear for themselves, wrought strongest, God knoweth; probably the latter; for the mob were wrought up to such a pitch of fury, that their masters dreaded the consequence, and therefore went about appeasing the multitude, and charging them not to touch us in our departure.

"While the constable was gathering his *posse*, we got our things from Mr. Clarke's, and prepared to go forth. The whole multitude were without, expecting us, and saluted with a general shout. The man Mrs. Naylor had hired to ride before her was, as we perceived, one of the rioters. This hopeful guide was to conduct us out of the

reach of his fellows. Mr. Minton and I took horse in the face of our enemies, who began clamouring against us; the gentlemen were dispersed among the mob to bridle them. We rode a slow pace up the street, the whole multitude pouring along on both sides, and attending us with loud acclamations. Such fierceness and diabolical malice I have not before seen in human faces. They ran up to our horses as if they would swallow us, but did not know which was Wesley. We felt great peace, and acquiescence in the honour done us, while the whole town were spectators of our march. When out of sight we mended our pace, and about 7 o'clock came to Wrexall. The news of our danger was got thither before us; but we brought the welcome tidings of our deliverance. We joined in hearty prayer to our Deliverer, singing the hymn,—

"Worship, and thanks, and blessing," &c.

NOTE TO PAGE 74.

HYMN,

BY THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY, M. A.

ON THE DEATH OF THOMAS BEARD,

WHO WAS IMPRESSED FOR A SOLDIER, AND DIED IN THE HOSPITAL AT NEWCASTLE.

Soldier of Christ, adieu!
Thy conflicts here are past;
The Lord hath brought thee through,
And given the crown at last:
Rejoice to wear the glorious prize,
Rejoice with God in paradise.

There all thy sufferings cease,
There all thy griefs are o'er;
The prisoner is at peace,
The mourner weeps no more:
From man's oppressive tyranny
Thou livest, thou livest for ever free.

Torn from thy friends below,
In banishment severe,
A man of strife and wo,
No more thou wander'st here;
Join'd to thy better friends above,
At rest in thy Redeemer's love.

No longer now constrain'd
With human fiends to dwell,
To see their evil, pain'd,
Their blasphemies to feel;
Angels and saints thy comrades are,
And all adore the Saviour there.

Thou canst not there bemoan
Thy friends' or country's loss,
Through sore oppression groan,
Or faint beneath the cross;
The joy hath swallow'd up the pain,
And death is thy eternal gain.

What hath their malice done,
Who hurried hence thy soul!
When half thy race was run,
They push'd thee to the goal,
Sent to the souls supremely blest,
And drove thee to thy earlier rest.

Thou out of great distress
To thy reward art past,
Triumphant happiness,
And joys that always last;
Thanks be to God, who set thee free,
And gave the final victory!

Thy victory we share,
Thy glorious joy we feel;
Parted in flesh we are,
But join'd in spirit still:
And still we on our brethren call,
To praise the common Lord of all.

Not for your needless aid,
Not for your useless prayers,
(Jesus for us hath pray'd,
And all our burdens bears,)
Yet still on you we call and cry,
"Extol the Lord of earth and sky."

Then let us still maintain
Our fellowship divine,
And, till we meet again,
In Jesus' praises join;
Thus, till we all your raptures know
Sing you above, and we below!

ANOTHER.

All worship and love
To the Father above,
Who hath summon'd another his glory to prove;
Who, in pity and grace,
Hath shorten'd his race,
And caught up a worm to the sight of his face.

Our friend is at rest,
In a paradise blest,
Which sorrow and Satan can never molest;
He hath shook off his clay,
He is wafted away,
And escaped to the regions of permanent day.

Thrice happy remove
To a country above,
Where all are employ'd in a triumph of love!
We thitherward tend,
We, too, shall ascend,
And begin the enjoyment which never shall end.

For this do we mourn,
Till, by angels upborne,
We again to our heavenly border return:
Caught up in the air,
We soon shall be there,
And our happy unfading inheritance share.

What joy shall abound,
When our brethren around
The throne of our glorious Redeemer are found!
When our comrades in pain,
We embrace them again,
And in Jesus's bosom eternally reign.

With loving surprise
The whole company cries,—
"How strangely at last are we met in the skies!
What a wonder of grace,
Transcending our praise,
That *we* should be seen in this holiest place!

"Poor sinners below,
Acquainted with wo,
How heavily once with our load did we go!
In trials severe,
How oft did we fear
We should never hold out, and should never come here!

"Fellow-prisoners beneath,
Our sorrowful breath
We wasted in passionate wishes for death;
Our evils so rife,
So painful our strife,
And so long did it seem, the sad moment of life!

"That moment is past!
We are landed at last;
We are safely arrived where our anchor was cast:
On Immanuel's land,
With a numberless band
Of cherubs and seraphs, exulting we stand.

"For a moment of pain
We on earth did sustain,
An eternal reward we in heaven obtain:
Who governs the skies
Hath banish'd our sighs,
And the Lamb he hath wiped all tears from our eyes.

"No uneasy alloy
Shall sully our joy,
While our harps in Immanuel's praise we employ;
Not a dissonant string
Shall be heard while we sing,
With the chorus of angels, our Saviour and King.

"Our Saviour we own,
Who sits on the throne,
Salvation ascribe to the Father and Son!
'We are saved by the Lamb!'
Let all heaven proclaim,
Let all heaven bow down to the wonderful name!

"Our Jesus surround,
With majesty crown'd,
And 'Amen' to our praises, ye seraphim, sound;
Lo, he shows us his face!
Ye seraphim, gaze,
Or fall, and adore in the spirit of praise.

"Thus, thus let us lie,
Till, raised by his eye,
'Hallelujah!' again, 'Hallelujah!' we cry;
Progressively move,
And in rapture improve,
And eternity spend in the praise of his love."

NOTE TO PAGE 124.

Mr. Charles Wesley declined to write an epitaph on Mr. Hervey; but he composed the following hymn on the occasion of his friend's death:—

PART I.

He 's gone! the spotless soul is gone,
Triumphant to his place above;
The prison walls are broken down,
The angels speed his swift remove,
And shouting on their wings he flies,
And Hervey rests in paradise.

Through the last dreadful conflict brought,
Which shook so sore his dying breast,
Far happier for that bitter draught,
With more transcendent raptures blest,
He finds for every patient groan
A jewel added to his crown.

Saved by the merit of his Lord,
Salvation, praise to Christ he gives;
Yet still his merciful reward
According to his works receives;
And with the seed he sow'd below,
His bliss eternally shall grow.

Redeem'd by righteousness divine,
In God's own portraiture complete,
With brighter rays ordain'd to shine,
He casts his crown at Jesus' feet,
And hails him sitting on the throne,
For ever saved by grace alone.

PART II.

Father, to us vouchsafe the grace
Which brought our friend victorious through;
Let us his shining footsteps trace,
Let us his steadfast faith pursue,
Follow this follower of the Lamb,
And conquer all through Jesus' name.

Through Jesus' name, and strength, and word,
The well-fought fight our brother won;
Arm'd with the Saviour's blood and sword,
He cast the dire accuser down;
Compell'd the aliens to submit,
And trampled flesh beneath his feet.

In vain the Gnostic tempter tried
With guile his upright heart t' insnare;
His upright heart the fiend defied;
No room for sin when Christ was there;
No need of fancied liberty,
When Christ had made him truly free.

Free from the law of sin and death,
Free from the Antinomian leaven,
He led his Master's life beneath;
And, labouring for the rest of heaven,
By active love, and watchful prayer,
He show'd his heart already there.

How full of heaven his latest word,
"Thou bidd'st me now in peace depart,
For I have known my precious Lord,
Have clasp'd thee, Saviour, in my heart,
My eyes thy glorious joy have seen!"
He spake, he died, and enter'd in.

O might we all like him believe,
And keep the faith, and win the prize!
Father, prepare, and then receive,
Our hallow'd spirits to the skies,
To chant, with all our friends above,
Thy glorious everlasting love.

NOTE TO PAGE 125.

Mr. Charles Wesley wrote the following hymns on the death of Mr. Grimshaw. We copy them from his own manuscript:—

I.

Thanks be to God, whose truth, and power,
And faithful mercies never end;
Who brings us through the mortal hour,
And bids our spotless souls ascend!

Thanks be to God, the God of love,
The giver of all-conquering grace;
Who calls our friend to joys above,
And shows him there his open face.

The God whom here his faith beheld,
The Father's fulness in his Son,
He sees in glorious light reveal'd,
And shouts and falls before the throne.

We, Saviour, at thy footstool lie,
Thy creatures, purchased by thy blood,
And "Holy! holy! holy!" cry,
In honour of the Triune God;

With angels and archangels join,
With all the ransom'd sons of grace,
Extol the Majesty Divine,
Or breathe unutterable praise.

We praise the constancy of love,
Which kept its favourite to the end,
Which soon shall all our souls remove,
Who trust in our Eternal Friend.

To us who in thy blood believe,
The world, the fiend, and sin tread down,
Thou wilt the final victory give,
And then the bright triumphal crown.

II.

How happy the dead Who Jesus adored!
The soldier is freed, And rests with his Lord:
His wayfare is ended, His labours are o'er,
The soul is ascended, And death is no more.

The ripe shock of corn Corruption defies;
The spirit is borne To God in the skies;
The partner of Jesus Looks down from above;
Lamenting, he sees us With pity and love.

"My father, my guide," Our Israel may say,
"Is torn from our side, Is vanish'd away!
A prophet's translation We justly deplore,
With calm lamentation And weeping adore.

"Devotion in tears Expresses its love,
Till Jesus appears, Our souls to remove;
The loss of a Stephen We greatly bewail;
He triumphs in heaven, We mourn in the vale.

"We mourn, but as men Rejoicing in hope,
To see him again, Together caught up,
Our great consolation When Jesus comes down,
The heirs of salvation With glory to crown.

"O Saviour descend! No longer delay
Our sufferings to end, And bear us away,
Where death cannot sever, Or sorrow molest,
Thy people, for ever Reposed on thy breast."

NOTE TO PAGE 131.

THE following poetical epistle was addressed by Mr. Charles Wesley to Mr. Whitefield:—

TO THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, 1755.

COME on, my Whitefield, (since the strife is past,
And friends at first are friends again at last,)
Our hands, and hearts, and counsels let us join,
In mutual league, t' advance the work divine.
Our one contention now, our single aim,
To pluck poor souls as brands out of the flame.
To spread the victory of that bloody cross,
And gasp our latest breath in the Redeemer's cause.

Too long, alas! we gave to Satan place,
When party-zeal put on an angel's face;
Too long we listen'd to th' consuming fiend,
Whose trumpet sounded, "For the faith contend!"
With hasty, blindfold rage in error's night,
How did we with our fellow-soldiers fight!
We could not then our Father's children know,
But each mistook his brother for his foe.
"Foes to the truth, can you in conscience spare?
Tear them," the tempter cried, "in pieces tear!"
So thick the darkness, so confused the noise,
We took the stranger's for the shepherd's voice;
Rash nature waved the controversial sword,
On fire to fight the battles of the Lord;
Fraternal love from every breast was driven,
And bleeding charity return'd to heaven.

The Saviour saw our strife with pitying eye,
And cast a look that made the shadows fly;

Soon as the dayspring in his presence shone,
We found the two fierce armies were but one.
Common our hope, and family, and name,
Our arms, our Captain, and our crown the same;
Enlisted all beneath Immanuel's sign,
And purchased every soul with precious blood divine.

Then let us cordially again embrace,
Nor e'er infringe the league of gospel grace;
Let us in Jesus' name to battle go,
And turn our arms against the common foe;
Fight, side by side, beneath our Captain's eye,
Chase the Philistines; on their shoulders fly;
And, more than conquerors, in the harness die.

For whether I am born to "blush above,"
On earth suspicious of electing love,
Or you, o'erwhelmed with honourable shame,
To shout the *universal* Saviour's name,
It matters not; if, all our conflicts past,
Before the great white throne we meet at last.
Our only care, while sojourning below,
Our real faith by real love to show,
To blast the alien's hope, and let them see
How friends of jarring sentiments agree;
Not in a party's narrow banks confined,
Not by a sameness of opinions join'd,
But cemented with the Redeemer's blood,
And bound together in the heart of God.

Can we forget from whence our union came,
When first we simply met in Jesus' name?
The name mysterious of the God unknown,
Whose secret love allured, and drew us on,
Through a long, lonely, legal wilderness,
To find the promised land of gospel peace.
True yokefellows we *then agreed* to draw
Th' intolerable burden of the law;
And, jointly labouring on with zealous strife,
Strengthen'd each other's hands to work for life;
To turn against the world our steady face,
And, valiant for the truth, enjoy disgrace.

Then, when we served our God through fear alone,
Our views, our studies, and our hearts, were one:
No smallest difference damp'd the social flame;
In Moses' school we thought and spoke the same.
And must we, now in Christ, with shame confess,
Our love was greater when our light was less?
When darkly through a glass, with servile awe,
We first the spiritual commandment saw,
Could we not then, our mutual love to show,
Through fire and water for each other go?
We could; we did. In a strange land I stood,
And beckon'd thee to cross th' Atlantic flood.
With true affection wing'd, thy ready mind
Left country, fame, and ease, and friends behind;
And, eager all Heaven's counsels to explore,
Flew through the watery world, and grasp'd the shore.

Nor did I linger, at my friend's desire,
To tempt the furnace, and abide the fire;
When, suddenly sent forth, from the highways
I call'd poor outcasts to the feast of grace,
Urged to pursue the work by thee begun,
Through good and ill report I still rush'd on,
Nor felt the fire of popular applause,
Nor fear'd the torturing flame in such a glorious cause.

Ah! wherefore did we ever *seem* to part,
Or clash in sentiment, while one in heart?
What dire device did the old serpent find,
To put asunder those whom God had join'd?
From folly and self-love opinion rose,
To sever friends who never yet were foes,
To baffle and divert our noblest aim,
Confound our pride, and cover us with shame;
To make us blush beneath her short-lived power,
And glad the world with one triumphant hour.

But lo! the snare is broke, the captive's freed,
By faith on all the hostile powers we tread,
And crush, through Jesus' strength, the serpent's head.
Jesus hath cast the cursed accuser down,
Hath rooted up the tares by Satan sown,

Kindled anew the never-dying flame,
And rebaptized our souls into his name.
Soon as the virtue of his name we feel,
The storm of strife subsides, the sea is still:
All nature bows to his supreme command,
And two are one in his almighty hand.
One in his hand O may we still remain,
Fast bound in love's indissoluble chain;
(That adamant which time and death defies,
That golden chain which draws us to the skies!)
His love the tie that binds us to his throne;
His love the bond that perfects us in one;
His love, (let all the ground of friendship see,)
His love alone constrains our hearts t' agree,
And gives the rivet of eternity.

The following hymns were addressed by Mr. Charles Wesley to Mr. Whitefield, at an early period of their public life:—

TO THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Brother in Christ, and well-beloved,
Attend, and add thy prayer to mine,
As Aaron call'd, yet inly moved,
To minister in things divine.

Faithful, and often own'd of God,
Vessel of grace by Jesus used;
Stir up the gift on thee bestow'd,
The gift through hallow'd hands transfused.

Fully thy heavenly mission prove,
And make thy own election sure;
Rooted in faith, and hope, and love,
Active to work, and firm t' endure.

Scorn to contend with flesh and blood,
And trample on so mean a foe;
By stronger fiends in vain withstood,
Dauntless to nobler conquests go.

Go where the darkest tempest lowers,
Thy foes, triumphant wrestler, foil;
Thrones, principalities, and powers,
Engage, o'ercome, and take the spoil.

The weapons of thy warfare take,
With truth and meekness arm'd, ride on;
Mighty through God, hell's kingdom shake,
Satan's strong holds, through God, pull down.

Humble each vain, aspiring boast,
Intensely for God's glory burn;
Strongly declare the sinner lost,
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS o'erturn, o'erturn!

Tear the bright idol from his shrine,
Nor suffer him on earth to dwell,
T' usurp the place of blood divine,
But chase him to his native hell.

Be all into subjection brought;
The pride of man let faith abase;
And captivate his every thought,
And force him to be saved by grace.

TO THE SAME, BEFORE HIS VOYAGE.

SERVANT of God, the summons hear,
The Master calls! arise, obey!
The tokens of his will appear,
His providence points out the way.

Lo, we commend thee to his grace,
In confidence go forth! be strong!
Thy meat his will, thy boast his praise,
His righteousness be all thy song.

Strong in the Lord's almighty power,
And arm'd in panoply divine,
Firm may'st thou stand in danger's hour,
And prove the strength of Jesus thine.

Thy breastplate be his righteousness,
His sacred truth thy loins surround;
Shod be thy beauteous feet with peace,
Spring forth, and spread the gospel sound.

Fight the good fight, and stand secure
In faith's impenetrable shield;
Hell's prince shall tremble at its power,
With all his fiery darts repell'd.

Prevent thy foes, nor wait their charge,
But call their lingering battle on;
But strongly grasp thy sevenfold targe,
And bear the world and Satan down.

The helmet of salvation take,
The Lord's, the Spirit's conquering sword;
Speak from the word,—in lightning speak;
Cry out, and thunder,—from the word.

Champion of God, thy Lord proclaim,
Jesus alone resolved to know;
Tread down thy foes in Jesus' name,
Go conquering, and to conquer go.

Through racks and fires pursue thy way,
Be mindful of a dying God;
Finish thy course, and win the day;
Look up, and seal the truth with blood.

NOTE TO PAGE 162.

The following epitaph upon Dr. Coke was written by the Rev. Richard Watson. It is inscribed upon a marble tablet in the City-road chapel, London, near the tablets which have been erected there in memory of the Rev. John and Charles Wesley, and Mr. Fletcher. Mr. Watson greatly admired the missionary zeal of Dr. Coke; and has, with a master's hand, sketched the peculiarities of his character, and his public labours:—

"ETHIOPIA shall soon stretch out her hands unto God,
And the isles shall wait for his law."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. THOMAS COKE, LL.D.,

OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD;

WHO WAS BORN AT BRECON, THE IX OF SEPTEMBER,

MDCCXLVII;

AND DIED THE III OF MAY, MDCCCXIV.

After a zealous ministry of several years in the Established Church,
He gave up himself, A. D. MDCCLXXVI, to the direction of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.,
And did the work of an Evangelist with much success in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland.
He was appointed, A. D. MDCCLXXXIV, the first Superintendent of the "Methodist Episcopal Church," in America.
To him also were confided the foreign Missions of the Methodists;
In support of which he expended nearly all his patrimonial fortune;
And encountered toils and self-denials,
Which the Christian world beheld with admiration.

By the blessing of GOD on the Missions to the Negroes in the West Indies,
Commenced by him A. D. MDCCLXXXVI,
Fifteen thousand persons had been formed, before his death, into religious societies,
And a foundation laid for the civilization and salvation of that degraded class of human beings.
To the Negro Race upon their native continent, as well as in the islands of their bondage,
His compassions were extended;
And he set the first example, in modern days, of efforts for the spiritual emancipation of Western Africa.

After crossing the Atlantic eighteen times, in the service of the souls of men,

His unwearied spirit was stirred within him
To take a part in the noble enterprise of evangelizing
British India;
And he sailed from England, A. D. MDCCCXIII, as the Leader
of the first Methodist Missionaries sent to Ceylon.
But this "burning and shining light," which, in the western
world, had guided thousands into the paths of peace,
Had now fulfilled its course; and suddenly, yet rich in evening
splendour, sunk into the shadows of mortality.
He died on the voyage; and his remains were committed to the
great deep, until the sea shall give up her dead.
His days were past; but his purposes were not broken off:
The work which he had planned has been made to
prosper;
And through the preaching of the Gospel, the circulation of the
Scriptures in the native tongues,
And the establishment of Christian Schools,
Many once-deluded Cingalese have exchanged the
wretchedness of an Atheistic Creed,
And the worship of idols and of devils, for the light and
comfort of the true religion.

The same love of CHRIST, which made him long the Advocate
and the Pattern of exertion in behalf of foreign lands,
Constrained him also to works of pious charity at home.
Into many neglected districts of England, Wales, and Ireland,
The means of grace were carried by his private bounty,
or through his public influence:
And his "praise is in the Gospel throughout all
the churches."

This monument was erected, A. D. MDCCCXXII, at the personal
expense of the Methodist Ministers and Missionaries,
As a record of their respectful gratitude for the disinterested
services, the eminent usefulness,
And the long-tried and faithful attachment of their now glorified
friend.

"He that winneth souls is wise."

RULES

OF THE

SOCIETY OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.

1. In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which, from thenceforward, they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than "a company of men having the form, and seeking the power, of godliness; united, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every class: one of whom is styled the leader. It is his business,

I. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order To inquire how their souls prosper;

To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require;

To receive what they are willing to give toward the support of the gospel;

II. To meet the ministers and stewards of the society once a week, in order

To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved;

To pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding; and

To show their account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, namely, "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind: especially that which is most generally practised, such as

The taking the name of God in vain:

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling:

Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity:

Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling uncustomed goods:

The giving or taking things on usury; that is, unlawful interest:

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers:

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us:

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as,

The putting on of gold or costly apparel;

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus;

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God:

Softness, and needless self-indulgence:

Laying up treasure upon earth:

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without the probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity; doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to

the hungry, by clothing the naked, by helping or visiting them that are sick, or in prison:

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that "We are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world: and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, By attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are,

The public worship of God;

The ministry of the word, either read or expounded;

The supper of the Lord;

Family and private prayer;

Searching the Scriptures; and

Fasting or abstinence.

7. These are the general rules of our societies: all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

JOHN WESLEY,
CHARLES WESLEY.

May 1, 1743.

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